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THE JESTER,

A COMEDY,

—BY—

LOUIS SPENCER DANIEL,

—WITH—

Full Explanation and All Necessary Stage Business,

AS PLAYED BY THE AUTHOR,

—AND HIS—

COMPANY OF AMERICAN PLAYERS.

1893.

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ACT FIRST—SCENE FIRST.

Elegant Interior setting, John Mortimer's Room. Sir John Mortimer, outside, in hall enters on Servant's arm. Back center door.

Easy! Easy now! E—asy! This confounded rheumatism, gout or lumbago or whatever they call it (to servant who supports him.) What did they say I had?—Eh?

James: Oh—er—ah—consumption—er—ah (James' great peculiarity is a very ridiculous laugh, a sort of gigue, and when reproved he always denies that he laughed. "I wasn't laughing.")

Sir John: Now what in the duece are thou laughing at?

James: Oh sir—I—I wasn't laughing sir!

Sir John: "The rheumatism!" Ha! Ha! Ha! Why, I am as hearty and as hale (tries to jump) Ah!—ah!—ah! here James—quick!

James: (comes to his aid and helps him to chair) Ah—ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir John: What in the name of seven ages art thou laughing at?

James: Er—ah—I—I wasn't laughing sir! Thou art too weak my lord.

Sir John: "My lord," Thou hast been reading bad literature! To me thou must say—"Sir John!" And mind thee, do not let me catch thee at any more of thy darned mockery. Thou shalt say, "Sir, dost thou hear sir?"

James: (has not been paying much attention) Er—ah—dost thou hear sir?

Sir John: Sir!

James: Sir!

Sir John: Oh thou blooming idiot!

James: Sir!

Sir John: Wilt thou be kind enough to remove—to remove—thyself from my presence, and stay out until thou art wanted? Go sir! (Laugh comic—Exit James) Oh—James!—James I say!

James: (re-enter) Yes, me-lord!

Sir John: W-h-a-t!

James! What? What-what?

Sir John: What—and to me! Oh—

James: Er—ha! Er—ha! Er—ha!

Sir John: Stop that laughing I say!

James: Er—ah—I—I was not laughing.

Sir John: Oh Heavens! Is Miss Mortimer in?

James: Yes sir.

Sir John: Tell her she is wanted. (exit James, getting his laugh in) That young lady must needs have a lecture. Her mother does not take the trouble; somebody must, so I'll begin. It will never do to let young girls have their own way too much. A pretty young girl with her own way and plenty of money, is a dangerous instrument.

Fay Mortimer (enter as convenient) Thou has sent for me? Here I am father (goes to him as he is seated, puts one arm about his neck, kindly and lovingly.)

Sir John: Yes, my child. (aside) 'Pon my life, this is awkward, I—I never scolded the child in my life. (aloud) ahem!—Fay!

Fay: (surprised) Yes father. (smoothing his locks)

Sir John: I was going to say, er—I was just going to say—

Fay: Yes father!

Sir John: (aside) Well, what in the duce was I going to say?

Fay: Ha! ha! ha! I'm sure thy little daughter can not guess.

Sir John: (aside) Tut! Tut! I must not let her see me put out like this. (To Fay) Listen thou to me, my young lady!

Fay: Yes father.

Sir John: Who is the young swain that I have heard thee praising for the last few days? Come now, out with it; No secrets from thy father. Who and what is he?

Fay: Why, who canst thou mean father? Thou knowest all my friends dost thou not?

Sir John: Tis I who question thee. Come now. Fay, no trifling with thy father, child. Who is the gentleman who "sings so sweetly; whose eyes are so bright; whose very words doth sound like music?" Ah—

Fay: Oh! Now I understand thee father. Thou hast overheard my conversation with Nina in the garden. It was cruel of thee to listen. Thou wilt not be angry with me father? Thou speakest of the Jester.

Fay: The Jester?

Fay: Yes father—the Jester. Hast thou never seen nor heard of him? It makes one very happy to know him, for he is so kind and gentle. Sadness and gloom vanish before him as darkness at the approach of the sun. He is so kind to me, father—sings his sweetest songs to me when I am sad, and when my heart seems too full of joy for earth, he sings his saddest songs. No friends, no home nor parents hath he, no one but a tiny little sister whom he loves more than his life. And when I asked about his mother he turned away for a moment and quickly changed the subject; but when he spoke to me again his eyes were full of tears and I knew that I had touched upon the tenderest chord, and I said no more. [Fay kneels at his side during her speech.]

Sir John: Yes! Yes! a tender chord—no doubt. Ah! my tender-hearted little daughter, thou must not allow thy fancy to get the best of thee. Keep away from the people of whom thou knowest nothing. Thou must remember too, thy promise to Sir Walter Hammond, and thy promise to thy father. Beside my dear, 'tis not fit that Sir John Mortimer's daughter should speak to outcasts and vagabonds. So there, my daughter, be more careful in the future.

Fay: But father, he is not like others who crowd the street. He is noble and gentle, and although I know his heart is sad, he makes good cheer. Father, did it never occur to thee that I do not love Sir Walter? Thou knowest 'twas thy choice, not mine. In obedience to thee, father, I accepted him. Sir Walter is a great lord, but he whom men call the Jester is a gentleman.

Sir John: Umph! I dare say, and some fine day thy diamonds will be missing and the Jester will disappear.

Fay: Oh father.

Sir John: Beside, what would the world say, to know that Sir John Mortimer's daughter associated with montebanks and fools? We shall have no more such company. I forbid thee speaking to him. Dost hear? No more of the fool.

Fay: Thou'art unjust father. True he is poor, and an out-cast. He earns his living by the talents God hath given him. But he is no fool.

Sir John: (rising) Well, what is the difference. All fools are Jesters.

Fay: But all Jesters are not fools.

Sir John: Boldness is not becoming to my fairy. Go now, help me with my coat and hat. I am going for a drive (as Fay is helping Sir John with coat, he taps bell and James enters) James, order my carriage; I shall go for a drive.

James: I beg thy pardon, Sir John, but there be an old hag at the door, and she insists on seeing thee immediately. Er-ha! er-ha! er-ha!

Sir John: "An old hag?" What is her name and what does she want?

James: Do not know sir. She is the same one as came here once before to see thee. Er-ha! er-ha! er-ha! er-ha.

Sir John: (aside) "Mrs. Mabb!" The devil; show her in! No no, wait James; I can't see her here.

Mrs. Mabb: (enters) Oh yes, thou canst Sir John—Thou canst not bluff me like that if I am "an ugly hag" (motions at James who gets his laugh off with good effect.)

Exit Fay with (aside) "What an odd old woman." Mrs. Mabb, going to door and coming in contact with James who is about to enter, (but does not.) "Thou devil's laughing jack!"

Sir John: Well, what dost thou want here Mrs. Mabb? Art thou not tired of worrying me? Heaven knows I am tired of thee.

Mrs. Mabb: But I am not tired of thee, "my dear John." I need thee in my old age. Thou makest use of me when thou needest me, and now I need thee, in my old age. I need money.

Sir John: Money? Did I not send thee twenty pounds last week? Surely the brats—the brats can not have spent it all.

Mrs. Mabb: No. The brats did not spend it all. I used it myself. Dost thou suppose I would stint myself for those brats? Then thou dost not know Mary Ann Mabb. Look here John—When thou didst ask me to help thee do away with thy brother Calvin's child I did not ask thee the little odds and ends. Five years after thou gavest Edward to my care thou camest with another child to me. I asked no questions of thee. It was thy re-

quest that I ask no questions concerning this second child. I have reared for thy sake two children, a boy and girl. One of them is the rightful Earl of Rockford. That is all I know of the two brats. That's all I want to know. But thou didst promise me one hundred pounds per month until my death, or until the brats were weaned. Well, I have done my duty, and I am here for money. Will I get it or not?

Sir John: No: Not another shilling! I'll not be imposed on like this any longer. (leans over to tap bell on table, Mrs. Mabb stopping him.) Hold on John, Hold on! Do not be rash. In a few years, perhaps, I can manage to get rid of the brats. Edward is making money; he will soon be a man. He is very proud. He is ashamed of me and will not stay with me much longer, and as he is fond of the little one he will take her with him.

Sir John: Edward is fond of her, didst thou say?

Mrs. Mabb: Well, that's what I said! And rest assured I shall raise no objection whenever they choose to run away from me. Now John, be sensible; thou hast two many irons in the fire to trifle with me. Come, I want ten pounds.

Sir John: And next week thou wilt want ten pounds more. By the bye, did I not warn thee against coming here; did not I forbid thy coming to my house?

Mrs. Mabb: Now see here Johnny! I am good enough to come to thy house, or to anybody else's house.

Sir John: Oh! Thou art—art thou? Well I don't think so! And curse thee, thou combination of smuggled ugliness, I will give thee five pounds, and if thou darest come here again, I will have the servants throw thee out into the street.

Mrs. Mabb: No no! That wont do, my "handsome sweetheart;" that wont do, that w-o-n-t do! I don't care for the ugly names—"curses like chickens, come home to roost." But I want money, and I mean to have it! Dost see this letter John? Oh—you recognize it? Ha! Ha! Ha! I thought so.

Sir John: Wretch! Give me those papers! I will have them and any cost! At any cost—even if I have to murder thee!

Mrs. Mabb: I should think one murder would be a fit climax for all thy numerous crimes. So thou wouldst murder me? Ha! ha! ha! Well, when thou chooseth John Mortimer, but

remember I hold papers of confession that would hang thee, if turned over to the authorities. Thou didst not know that thou wert walking into my trap when thou wrotest me this letter, didst thou? Ah! No! Thou wert too good to come and talk with me in my humble home, but thou must write it all. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir John: Great Heavens? Will I never finish paying for my follies?

Mrs. Mabb: Yes.

Sir John: And when, pray tell me!—when thou art in the grave I suppose?

Mrs. Mabb: No John. Thy troubles will only begin then; for thou wilt have no one to help thee carry out thy treacherous plans. I say John, thou wilt be lonesome without me. But, we shall meet again John, dear, in a world beyond. (Points down instead of up. John does not see it.)

Sir John: I trust that when we enter that great world above—(pointing upward and looking upward; Mrs. Mabb interrupts.)

Mrs. Mabb: Hold on John! hold on! Not up there, but down yonder. (Pointing downward.) Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Well, give me fifty pounds and I will give thee back thy letter, and keep the coast clear for a whole month.

Sir John: Thou wilt give me the letter?

Mrs. Mabb: Aye, fifty pounds first!

Sir John: Here, here are one hundred pounds; give me the letter and never let me hear from thee again, or see thy ugly face.

Mrs. Mabb: Good! good! This will keep me quiet for a cool thirty days, and maybe longer (going). Good day to thee John. Take good care of thy sweet self!

Sir John: One moment! Stay! Tell me something about the two children I have entrusted to thy care. What are they like? The boy, Edward—is he handsome, and what of the little one?

Mrs. Mabb: (returns from door, rubbing hands) Well! well! Upon my soul now—the boy, Edward, is handsome, and a manly lad he is too. A great favorite with all the lassies down in our neighborhood. But then thou knowest, Sir John, I have been mighty particular about his raising. “Spare the rod, and spoil the child.”

Sir John : What ! You beat them ?

Mrs. Mabb : Now sit down ! You never raised a child in your life.

Sir John : Go on ! Tell me about the children.

Mrs. Mabb : Well now, Edward. I think thou shalt have cause to be proud of him some day. Down in our parts they call him the Jester.

Sir John : The Jester ?

Mrs. Mabb : Well now, that's what I said. I knew thou wouldst be surprised as well as proud. When Mary Ann Mabb educates a lad he is a daisy. They call him the Montebank or the Jester—the Merry-Maker you see. At night he goes with the players to the play house and helps to make the people laugh, and they pay him money. In the day he goes out upon the highway and makes merry for the crowds. But when he passes his hat ! My ! Thou shouldst see the pennies they cast to him.

Sir John : (aside) My poor Calvin's child.

Mrs. Mabb : "My poor Calvin's child !" Bah ! I guess he's pretty much in thy interest, hey ? Hump ! Well sir ! Thou shouldst see the little "she brat" dance, and hear her sing : When she gets a little older I'll make her earn a handsome living in the street with her pretty face. That I will. (rises to go)

Sir John : Oh ! This is too much ! Too much !

Mrs. Mabb : Well, I'll leave you to enjoy it. (Goes to door, returns and taps Sir John on shoulder.) I say ! Sir John, thou hast a pretty daughter—your Fay I mean.

Sir John : Well what of her ? How dare you speak her name ?

Mrs. Mabb : Edward is a handsome lad. All the lassies fall in love with him. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Sir John : Well, what of that ?

Mrs. Mabb : Thy daughter loves him ! I know it ! Edward would make a good match for her. Good day John (exit)

Sir John : (after she goes, taps bell and James enters.) James, order the carriage. Tell lady Mortimer I wish to speak with her. (as James is about to go)—and James, never admit that old woman into the gates again—do you hear ?

James : Yes sir ! Te—he ! te—he ! te—he ! te—he ! (exit)

Sir John : If many more troubles come upon me I shall be

prostrated, I know I shall. Ah well—I'll go to-day and see Sir Walter Hammond and hasten the marriage between himself and Fay. It must be hastened! I foresee a storm. (Fay stands in door in time to hear this conversation.) I am losing faith in Mrs. Mabb, and Fay has foolishly fallen in love with some handsome vagabond. I'll marry her to wealth and station, and do away with the responsibility of looking after her. Beside, the day she becomes old Hammond's wife, I am to have fifty theus-and pounds—a sum not so easily picked up every day. (exit at other door—does not see Fay, who has been listening.)

Fay: (enter) Fifty thousand pounds! Whew! (walks across to mirror and looks at her image.) Fifty thousand pounds!

Lady Mortimer: (enters) What about fifty thousand pounds dearest?

Nay: Oh nothing mother—nothing.

Lady Mortimer: Why my child, what is the matter? There is a great big tear in your eye. Come, tell mother all about it.

Fay: Well you see mother—father has lots of fine cattle and he is going to sell his favorite for fifty thousand pounds. The one I have heard him say an hundred times that he loved better than his life.

Lady Mortimer: Well! well! well! And is that the cause of all thy sadness? My foolish child!

Fay: Yes mother—that is the cause of it all. I—I am very silly, am I not?

Lady Mortimer: Indeed thou art. But tell me my child—which one of the animals it is thou hast taken such an interest in? From thy earliest childhood thou wert fond of animals. I suppose you have fallen into a little crying spell. Tell me which one of the animals it is—one of the blooded stock? Are you very much interested. Perhaps I can persuade Sir John.

Fay: Oh mother! I am sure you cannot. Yet I am deeply interested in the little animal. When Sir John comes in ask him about the little animal that he is going to sell for fifty thousand pounds. Now kiss me mother, and I will run and get ready for lunch. (Kisses and runs, exits back.)

Sir John: (enters left stage door) Oh! Waiting my dear? I sent James for thee; I am going for a long drive—shall not return until about an hour after moonrise.

Lady Mortimer: Where art thou going dear? Can I not go with thee?

Sir John: Impossible! Too long a journey. I shall pass through Downer, and on to Rockford castle, to where some lagard tenants are at work. As I shall not return until late, do not wait supper for me.

Lady Mortimer: But suppose thou shouldst fall sick, or an accident should come to thee, those rough tenants would not know how to wait on thee.

Sir John: If they should wait on me half as patiently as I wait on them for their rents I shall be satisfied. So there dear, I must hurry away, the sun is already high into the Heavens. Good day dear. (kisses her) Where is my little fairy—is she not coming so kiss me?

Mrs. Mortimer: Ah! The poor child has just gone to her room. Her heart is almost broken because she heard that thou wert going to sell one of thy favorite animals for fifty thousand pounds. (Sir John starts fearfully.) Is it true John? And which one is it? Why John, what is the matter? There seems to be a mystery about that animal and the sale of it. Tell me what it is dear?

Sir John: Ha! ha! ha! Oh its all a fairy tale! All a fairy tale. Only a joke. (exit back door center.)

Fay: (enters at door behind, as they go out.) A joke! my life—my happiness a joke. What am I to expect of the rest of the world, when my own father betrays my happiness, and goes over to my enemies for as much gold as I could hold in my two hands thus? (Crosses over to door in hall as if watching Sir John.) Ah! Sir John, thou need not throw kisses to me! Thou hath put me on my guard and I must make the best of “a joke.” (Comes back into room and seats herself at table. James is seen outside large open doors.)

Sir John: (outside—distance) I say, James! If that Jester comes around here to-day just kick him off the grounds and warn him never to return!

James: Alright sir!

Fay: If you do James, thou shalt be discharged within the hour!

James: Sir John comimands!

Fay: And so do I! Obey me, or I shall have the servants

tie thee and horse-whip thee before Sir John returns! Dost hear sir?

James: Yes marm!

Fay: If there is to be any kicking done here to-day, I shall do it myself. Dost hear?

James: Yes marm! Te-he! te-he! te-he!

Fay; That will do! You may go! Stay! Bring me pen and paper. (James obeys. She writes. James retires.)

To Edward, called the Jester:

"Thou wilt pardon this liberty and over-look my haste. Since our last conversation on the lawn something dreadful has happened. I must speak with thee and have thy council on a most important matter. To-night at moonrise meet me down at the east side of the lawn near to the harbor. Do not fail. I have found out whom thy father was. At moon-rise to-night. East side of lawn near harbor. Remember!" F. M.

(She folds letter, rings bell and James enters.)

Yes marm!

Fay: When the Jester passes, instead of kicking him, give him this letter. Mind thee! Say not a word to him. Dost understand?

James: Yes marm! Te-he! te-he! te-he! (exit)

Fay: Fifty thousand pounds! He prizes me highly. Too true!—"Every man has his price." But what price is so great that it will induce a true father to part with the child he loves? Ah! I do fear me—something has gone wrong. Perhaps, I have not been a good daughter to Sir John. But Heaven knows I have done my best to please him. Gold! And I must go and be a slave to old Sir Walter Hammond. Have I no right to love, no right to be loved? 'Tis cruel! Only a joke! Ha! ha! ha! ha! "A joke?" Yes we shall call it a joke, as we would call life and love and freedom a joke. (enter Lady Mortimer center door.)

Lady Mortimer: Come dear! Why what is the matter? Still shedding tears over the sale of a poor animal? Ha! ha! ha! Brush away thy tears. I have spoken to Sir John and he declared it all a joke. So dry thy bright eyes and come lets in to lunch.

Fay: (slowly and thoughtfully) A joke?

Lady Mortimer: Why certainly, only a joke. Sir John loves to tease. Come lets in to lunch! Why Fay! why art thou so sad and of what art thou thinking, (this while they are going toward back center door) and what ails thee?

Fay: I do not know mother what ails me to day. I—I have been thinking of mankind.

Lady Mortimer: Of man: That is too deep a subject for thy youug head.

Fay: Say rather—too shallow! (Lady Mortimer laughs gaily.) Human nature with all its odds and ends of wealth, even when at its best, is fickle. As we count upon the blowing of the wind, so may we count upon humanity. The condition of the earth's movement makes the changes in the winds; so the condition of a man's liver makes the change in man's temperature. At the best we are but animals of a higher order—brutes! Some of us! (Interior closes in—open woodland scene. Exit both.)

SCENE II—ACT I.

East side of lawn, moonlight night—2d grove front, to close in interior and give time for an interior change. A bench, or seat of some sort in this scene. At left exit there must be a stone wall, a fence or something for Jester to climb over. He is heard singing, whistling or playing guitar outside; he talks as he climbs the wall and does not read the letter until he gets on top of the wall.

The Jester: "At moon-rise." Sure, 'tis moon-rise now. "At the east side of the lawn near harbor." This is the east side—this is the lawn and—and yonder is the harbor. Now I do wonder what she wants with me! Whan can have happened? (opens letter again and reads) She knows who my father is—ha! ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha! ha!—thats too good! She knows who my father is." Sure and me thinks me knows that me self. But then that is saying "I am a wise son." I wonder how she came to know so much. Ah well! there's no counting on what a woman knows. (after looking around a little) Tis time she was come.

"A pretty place, and a pretty night,
And a pretty girl—just in sight."

I shall hidé here and give her a little surprise. (gets behind wing, box or something. Must be seen by audience all time) Now I wonder what she can want with me, and how she managed to get away from the old man. Tut! tut! I've got more curiosity in my bones than an old woman. Ah! Here she comes like a tardy school girl. Running a race with the moon. Perhaps she's after the man in the moon. One woman too many. (Enter Fay stage right, closely wrapped, followed by Nina, her maid.

Fay: This is the spot Nina dear, but he has not yet come 'Tis ever thus, we poor women must be all patience and wait their pleasure.

Nina! After this discovery of Sir John's plots, I should think nothing would disappoint or surprise thee. Art thou quite sure thou didst not mistake his words? I am sorry thou didst tell it me—I had loved Sir John and now I hate him.

Fay: Thou art the only one to whom I can go to with my sorrows. I could not keep the secret.

Jester: (aside from hiding place) I never saw a woman that could keep a secret.

Nina: Thou art right my dear Fay.. No secrets shall ever come between us.

Fay: Nina, thou art more like to a sister than a maid. (kisses her,) Go dear and wait at yonder elm until I call thee. 'Tis time Edward was coming. (Nina goes out right. Fay returns as she talks and sits on bench with her back to where the Jester is hiding.) Suppose he does not come at all. Perhaps he thinks me over-bold and will not come. It was indeed rash for me to come here. Mayhaps Edward thinks me over-bold and scorns me. He will not come! Oh! And what am I to say to him when he does come? (Jester creeps up behind her.)

The Jester: (catching her in his arms) Say that thou dost love him! (Fay screams and faints, he catches her in his arms.) Mercy upon her! She has fainted.

Nina: (rushing in) Thou hast frightened my poor young mistress to death!

Jester: 'Twas very thoughtless in me, I do confess.

Nina: Give her to me! Open this bottle.

Jester: Take her! I know nothing of women. (Nina gets

smelling bottle open, smells it and goes to sneezing. While sneezing she holds out bottle to Jester. His left arm is around Fay. He takes bottle with his right—smells it first, and both he and Nina are thrown into a violent fit of sneezing. Nina and Jester both are making laughable attempts to remove Fay—whose arms are locked about Jester's neck. Between sneezes Jester kisses first one and then the other. The smelling bottle has now started Fay to sneezing. Jester has Nina in his right arm and Fay in his left. Both of the girls have their arms locked about him. They are all sneezing. Now they are almost through sneezing. Both girls resting easy. Jester says—"a *position of trust!*" The girls are pillowed—now they slowly raise their heads and the two girls—their heads only about seven inches apart—gaze into each others eyes. As Fay exclaims "*Nina!*" that individual over-come with blushes—runs away (exit) crying.) "*Oh you horrid man!*"

Fay: (still resting on Jester) Ah!—me! (sighing)

Jester: Poor little lady! Did I frighten thee? It was very naughty of me. Thou wilt forgive? (kisses her effectively) Come lets rest here. (leads her to bench)

Fay: I have much to say to thee Edward. I—I was so afraid thou wouldst not come.

Jester: Thou couldst not doubt me?

Fay: Doubt thee? No Edward! 'Twas a childish fear. I was afraid thou hadst met with some accident—some ill luck. (Jester laughs appreciatively.) Hast thou been well and happy, and what hast thou been doing since last we met? Didst thou sneeced at the play-house, and what of thy little sister?

Jester: Thy questions—fair one, like thy charms o'erwhelm me. Now to begin: I arrived here before thee. Thou wert late, but away with that. A woman is always allowed thirty minutes. The little one at home—why, she is as happy as a queen! I bought her a new frock. And it—

Fay: —Yes? How much did it cost?

Jester: A shilling!

Fay: Oh! My!!

Jester: Well now, it was very expensive, was it not?

Fay: V-e-r-y!

Jester: Oh! We never mind the cost of anything. She's as proud of it though it had cost ten pounds. Thy third ques-

tion; "What have I been doing?" Ah Fay—I beg thy pardon—Miss Mortimer!

Fay: (putting hand to his mouth) No no! The first was right!

Jester: (to cover embarrassment) Now please do not interrupt me, "my dear Fay," or I shall never be able to answer thy questions. Since I saw thee last I have toiled very hard, day and night, with but one object and one thought To make myself worthy of thee, was the object, and thou art my only thought. The world is not always kind, and fortune plays with us as a playful kitten toys with a mouse. This moment it allows us freedom and life, and next it holds us under its claws. To prolong the amusement it turns the mouse free, only to bring it back into its power again, and when it is tired of its plaything it crushes the hopeful little mouse. So, fortune plays with us. It lets us go—but with that strong chain called "poverty," it draws us back again!

Fay: Thou art unhappy?

Jester! No! For *thou* art with me now!

Fay: But when I am no longer with thee?

Jester: Then I go back into the life that has so few pleasures for me. 'Tis my duty to amuse the world. They are like so many children and must be humored and taken in their mood. *They* smile when *I* smile, but when I weep I weep alone. 'Tis ever so. But I do not care for their pity. The silent battle that is taking place here in my breast is mine—and must be fought by me alone. 'Tis a mortal and a sacred combat. "The Jester!" Knowest thou the meaning of that? 'Tis the polite way of saying "The Fool." There are two kinds of fools. "Wise fools" and "darned fools." The wise fools make foot stools out of the darned fools. But come, thou knowest a secret that is dearer to me than my life. Thou knowest who and what my father was; impart that which thou knowest to me I pray thee, and make me a wiser and happier man. I would clear my mind of a doubt that has been the greatest curse of my youth.

Fay: All that I know, I learned of an old woman that came to see my father. She was old and bent with age, and her face contained a volume of wickedness. She passed me in the lawn and tried to take my hand, and when I drew away with fear she laughed a horrid laugh, and told me I was loved by one whom men call "The Jester."

Jester: And so thou art!

Fay: And then she muttered some words I could not understand. I drew nearer to her and gave her a coin, which she clutched greedily, and then with words of flattery she linked our names and said I should never have cause to be ashamed of thee for thou wert the son of a great Earl.

Jester: Great Heavens! It was Mrs. Mabb!

Fay: And who, I pray thee tell me, is Mrs. Mabb?

Jester: Listen Fay! The world says she is my grandmother. Dost thou believe it?

Fay: I can not believe it!

Jester: I do not—will not—believe it! Would she not tell thee the name of that earl, or give thee some clue?

Fay: No—although I offered her gold.

Jester: I shall ring a confession from her before to-morrow's sun comes and goes again!

Fay: Thou art not the only unfortunate, Edward. I too have cause for sorrow.

Jester: How so?

Fay: Sir John has made me the promised bride of Sir Walter Hammond.

Jester: But thou didst not consent? 'Twas not thy will?

Fay: No! But Sir John has sold me to him.

Jester: What! Do I hear aright? Sell thee as he would bargain cattle or slaves? Impossible!

Fay: 'Tis true! I have it from his own lips.

Jester: Well. I'll be —— How much did he get for thee?

Fay: Fifty thousand pounds!

Jester: Fifty thousand! You brought a good price didn't you? Sir John ought to raise some more just like thee. He would own England! (Looks Fay over carefully—takes her chin in his hand—raises her head and kisses her.) *That's worth ten shillings!* (He seats her on bench and gets around to her back—leans over her.) Affairs in England are indeed assuming an odd shape. Tell me one thing, and tell me truly. Suppose a poor lad, alone and friendless in this world—a lad who toils earnestly for an honest living—a lad who thinks of thee all the day and dreams of thee at night—a lad sees thy image, no matter when he wanders; suppose that lad loved thee more than his own life, but

would not punish thee by asking thee to be his own, because—be—because he was ignorant of his birth, couldst thou, wouldst thou love him Fay? (He bends closely over her and tries to see her face. Fay shows the audience her emotion. The audience must also see the effect of her hesitation upon the Jester. The audience must see the struggle in the hearts of both. Suddenly, Fay can control herself no longer—she looks quickly upward into his face (over her head)—sees his sadness and throws her arms backward and clasps them around his neck. No word is uttered. A deep sigh from Fay as though some deep burden were heaved from off her soul. The Jester's arms are about her. They hold this picture about ten seconds. Nina comes on right, sees their position and rushes back. The Jester unclasps Fay's arms. Holds her hands in his on his breast and says—looking upward.) "There will be no sale."

Fay: How can we prevent it Edward?

Jester: By faith in God, and thy earnest prayers.

Nina: (rushing in hurriedly) Quick! Away! Sir John is coming. (points stage left)

Fay: Go Edward! Do not let him see thee here!

Jester: Canst thou trust me?

Fay: Always!

Jester: May Heaven bless thee!

Fay: Good night!—Good night! (exit right, followed by Nina.)

Nina: (returns almost immediately as if hunting for something.) I lost—I—I—lost my—

Jester: (who pretends to assist search, grabs her and kisses her, saying as he does so.) Here it is! (exit Nina. Jester seated on bench. Enter Sir John stage left. He discovers Jester and stops.)

Sir John: What dost thou here? Move on!

Jester: Resting, Sir! Good luck to thee and thine!

Sir John: Well, I've got everything that thou canst steal under lock and key! Better go thy way!

Jester: My good father, I know thee not! But wilt thou answer me one honest question?

Sir John: Say on!

Jester: If thou art an honest man, for such I take thee to be, why dost think me a rogue?

Sir John: Did I say thou wert a rogue?

Jester: Thou didst!

Sir John: I know thee by thy clothes.

Jester: Who am I—What am I?

Sir John: Nobody! No—nothing!

Jester: I am discovered! (aside) But I think I am a better judge of human nature than he is. I'll play him a role! (aloud) Thou sayest aright my good old man. I see thou knowest me. When I was quite a lad, I had a terrible blow on my head. When I recovered from the shock it was found that I had an insane desire to track thieves and murderers and all dishonest men. And now I make an honest living by running down dishonest men. The royalty of England employ me, and more than one man have I chased into London Tower. Aha! Dost thou not recognize the celebrated "B. B."?

Sir John: "B. B."—What's that?

Jester: Billie Bubbles!

Sir John: No! no! no! I recognize nothing! What dost thou want with me? And why art thou here? (fear)

Jester: Ah! Sir John Mortimer, I have been at thy heels for twenty years!

Sir John: Thou hast no beard. Thy tale is false.

Jester: Aha! That is my secret. Thy father employed me when thou wert a tiny little boy to rid him of cattle thieves. I never grow old; like King Richard—I was born with teeth and came into this world on my feet.

And I *loved* thy father Sir John. For his sake I have, spared thee. But there is one above, whose powers are omnipotent—with Him thou wilt soon have a settlement.

Sir John: Thy face is too young thus to deal with me—down vagabond or whatever thou art and tell me what thou knowest! (catches Jester's left arm with his right, grips him down to left knee.)

Jester: Be careful how thou dealest with thy fathers most dangerous weapon! Think on thy crimes Sir John! Of that last deed of injustice—the sale of she whom thou callest thy daughter! Aha! I know all. Oh, thou art a bold, *bad* son. Surely thou didst not think to hide thy crimes from all the world?

Sir John: Crime! What crime? Art thou playing with me boy? Tell me all thou knowest!

Jester: Surely thou thinkest I know but little, to tell it all in few words. Leave go my arm—you hurt me!

Sir John: What art thou—man or devil?

Jester: Devil! (rises and vies with Sir John. Their eyes meet for the first time.)

Sir John: Boy! Where got you those eyes? Thy name is—?—

Jester: (When Sir John releases his hold, the Jester dusts his knee and arm)—[aside] Sure, and I believe he is going to claim kin with me. (aloud) Oh—these eyes? Well, I don't remember just now where I got them; for you see I've had them for some little time. In fact ever since I came into the world.

Sir John: But your family name?

Jester: Since men call me the Jester, why not say my father was Mr. Jester and my mother Mrs. Jester? The Jester family is a large one—our name is legion! (significantly) All fools are Jesters! Good night brother! Ha! ha! ha! ha! (teasingly.)

Sir John: (angrily) He who laughs last, laughs best!

Jester: Yes, but the one that laughs first has the most fun! (exits left laughing.)

Sir John: A wise fool! He knows too much! Those eyes! I can never forget them! How like Calvin as I forced him down upon his knees! The laugh, the voice—all sound as one! "The Jester!" I must get rid of him, cost what it may! My brother's ghost seems upon my track to-night. I can find no rest nor sleep. I must to the priest! No! I'll not confess all—not yet. (Jester comes in as Sir John goes r)

Jester: The most eventful night of my existence! Here's a pretty caper! (mimics) "Where got you those eyes?" (laughs heartily) It's a wonder he did not demand my license for living. "Where got you those eyes?" (laughs heartily) These English Lords are a most presuming lot of asses. Why, they think no one has a right but themselves. "Where got you those eyes. (laughs heartily) I think I'll go consult a looking glass. (is going to stage left and sees Fay's kerchief on the ground where she has dropped it) A kerchief! Hers! [handles tenderly] Hers! (presses it to his lips) Hers! (looks at it thoughtfully) Yes, it is hers'. (is about to place it into his bosom—stops) Next to my heart! Oh! What a fool I am!

She surely does not care for me, and I—what care I for her? (throws kerchief upon ground, goes left—stops) 'Tis not for me to love. Poor devil that I am, and wedded to my art—'tis madness: Away with thoughts of love! "Love?" Who speaks of love? (laughs heartily) A fool in love! "Love?" 'Tis but a passion—that comes and goes and comes again. "Love?" Not I—why—why 'tis but a weakness. Tut! Tut! To home and to bed—to-morrow 'twill be done. (turns and gazes abstractly at kerchief on ground) "To-morrow." Do I love her? No! But—but I like her. (goes to kerchief—down on one knee, lifts the kerchief with great tenderness, as though it were a thing as dear as life) I love her! (doubt returns) I think I love her. (presses kerchief to his lips) I know I love her! (thrusts kerchief and hand into his shirt) Yes! I love her madly! (Picture.)

[Curtain on First Act.]

ACT 2d—SCENE 1st.

Exterior—street scene. First Groove near stage enter Mrs. Mabb, drunk and drinking, stage left.

Mrs. Mabb: Keep them? Ha! ha! ha! I'll keep the brats! But I must have money ye know. Money! Ah! Money buys rum! Money does everything. 'Tis the sap that keeps alive the oak—the soil that makes the plant to grow, the rain and the dew that refreshes and gives vigor to the plant. I must have money for taking care of the children. (drinks from bottle) That Edward! Bah! (drinks) He sets the street urchins to prating, and when I go into the street they jeer at me. Call me vagabond! Call me she-devil! That does he. I'll tan his back when I get well and strong again. The ranting demon! "A horse! A horse!" Oh! I'm getting sick of him. He sets me wild with his spouting. He knows too much! He knows too much! He ought to be in a mad house. "A horse! A horse!" He'll ride to hell some fine day, and I'll be glad of it! (drinks) But he is a great Earl's son. That's my secret. 'Tis worth gold. (drinks) After all, he's a good lad. Edward is a good lad. He gives me pennies sometimes, to buy *rum* with. Life would not be worth living without rum. (drinks) That devil

doctor [holding left side] tells me the heart in my body will suddenly stop its beating and I shall die. It will, eh? [drinks] Trying to scare me—cheat me out of my money. My hearts *alright!* I say [drinks] my hearts alright! It's rum I need! Good—old—rum! [catching left side] Eh! eh! eh! eh! That pain again! *All* caused by that Edward, ranting through the house like a wind storm. I—I can't beat him now—he's too strong. But I—I can beat the little one—the *she-brat*, and that's what will I! [catches side in great agony] Oh! oh! oh! O-H! That pain again! 'Tis a lie that doctor told! I'm not afraid of death. No! no! I'm not going to die! Give me rum! Rum! I must have more rum! [exit stage right—the bottle emptied]

ACT II—SCENE II.

Mrs. Mabb's home, also home of Jester. An old attic scene. A rude bed, a table. Dilapidated. An old loud-ticking clock. A door in rear, also a window in rear. Little Edna discovered half asleep in large—old time arm chair.

Edna: I wonder what time it is. [looking left at clock] There is the clock! I wish I could tell the time. Let me see. Ten minutes—ten minutes of two o'clock. No, the big hand is in front. Ten minutes after [yawns] ten minutes [falls back in chair and doses] Two—ten minutes after [yawns] ten! My! what a horrid dream I have had. Thought I was in a little town called [name of town playing] and—[sleepily]—"dead busted!" My! My! How horrid! The town was full of Goblins and they all ran after me! They—were—after—me! (yawns) I don't like to wish anyone harm, but hey! hey! hey! I wish they'd get grandma!—And eat her up! She said me and Edward never had no mothers nor fathers neither. Said the devil laid Edward and the sun hatched him! hey! hey! hey! I wonder who I belong to. Guess they'll just call me *Miss Nobody* from *Nowhere* when I grow up to be a big, fine young lady, like them what goes to church on Sunday mornin's. [yawns] Edward says me and him is "*job lots!*" Edward says he saw our mother once; but Mrs. Mabb, our grand mother, says that Edward tells lies, and he aint got good sense no how. I wonder if Mrs Mabb will go to Heaven when she dies. [yawns sleepily] I don't 'spect she will. [As Edna falls asleep, cuddled up in big arm chair, a knock is heard at the door.]

Jack Robinson: [knocking and out side] Sure, and if

thou wilt not let me in I'll just walk in. (opens door) No one at home! (comes in) Faith, then I'll just wait a bit, for I must have the bad news broke to Master Edward. It's disappointed he'll be when he has the word, poor lad. A better-hearted lad never lived. A merry-maker with a smile for all—a kind word for everyone, and a harsh word for no one. My! What a nasty hay stack! Ah—well enough; some lives in palaces and some lives in gables; some lives in mud huts, and some lives in stables. I'll just sit down and wait a bit. (not seeing little Edna in the big chair, he sits down on her. She awakes and squeal—Both yell.)

Robinson: (gets stage left, to front) Holy mother! and, St. Patrick! Sure, an' what are ye? Man or beast? (comes slowly closer) Neither! It's a small woman!

Edna: I'm sorry I had to squeal on thee, but its the first time I was ever set down on! Now will you be kind enough to tell me how you got into this house, Mr. Robber?

Robinson: Sure, and ye don't take me for a robber?

Edna: (nods assent) Well, I thought perhaps thou wert one of those unfortunate robbers who makes mistakes and gets into wrong houses.

Robinson: A robber! Ha! ha! ha! A fine joke that, but I don't like it. An' you thought I was a robber, Eh?

Edna: Well you *looks* lots *like* a robber.

Robinson: Well, I'm not a robber!

Edna: You deceived your looks, didn't you? Won't ye set down? Er—er—er—wait—you forgot something didn't ye? Hey! hey! hey!—forgot to introduce yourself!

Robinson: Who to?

Edna: Crushed! I hope I don't feel bad.

Robinson: Oh! I beg pardon, Miss—er—ah—er.

Edna: [rising and courtesying] Miss Edna Mabb.

Robinson: Oh yes! I beg pardon—Miss Mabb—hem! Permit me the pleasure of introducing to thee—hem! the celebrated—

Edna: What makes you say "hem!" for?

Robinson: —The celebrated Jack Robinson, P. S., of the—

Edna: —What's the "P. S." for? Hey! hey! I know! wait—Pug Soup! Hey?

Robinson: *Mr. Jack Robinson*, of thee—

Edna : [advancing] Well hello Jack ! I'm devilish glad to know you ! Wont you *sit down* ? [Pushes him into chair—climbs back into her chair] Now Jack, "me boy," be brief.

Robinson : [surprise—aside] Well, I'll be hung up.

Edna : Time is gold in this here ranch.

Robinson : Yes, I should think it would be. [aside] Old gold—old time ! [aloud] I say, little one ; how old art thou ?

Edna : Six or nine.

Robinson : How is that—six or nine ?

Edna : Well, if you don't believe it, I've got it down on a piece of paper, and I'll show it to thee. [goes and finds paste board with a big "6" on it. By inverting the board the figure looks like a nine.] Here it is ! Here it is ! I've found it ! [Carries it to Robinson, who seems greatly puzzled, turning board first up and then down.] Now Mr. "Smarty," how old am I ? Six or nine ?

Robinson : [In despair] I don't know—I can't tell !

Edna : And I don't know, and I don't care. (climbs back into chair.) I say, *Mr. Robinson*, art thou the man that "owns the—circus ?"

Robinson : I handle the properties.

Edna : Oh ! Dost thou ? Then *you'll* soon own the circus, wont you ? Hey ! hey !—er—do they watch thee ?

Robinson : I'm no animal !

Edna : Oh ! Aint you ? Well *Mr. Robinson*—Jack—*pea soup*—

Robinson : See here, little one ; you're entirely too pert. I came here on business.

Edna : State your business ! State your business !

Robinson : Jack Robinson—P-r-o-p-s, if you please, "Mademoiselle a la Pert," and my business is with my young friend, Master Edward Mabb, the Jester ; is he in ?

Edna : N-op, he's out ! [short]

Robinson : Arah ! Why didn't ye say so ?

Edna : Why didn't ye ask me ?

Robinson : Sure, and I *did* ask ye !

Edna : You didn't !

Robinson : I did !

Edna : Didn't !

Robinson : I did, I did, I did, I did !

Edna: (at top of her voice) Didn't, didn't, didn't, didn't, didn't!

Robinson: (rushing for door) *Good morning!*

Edna: (as Robinson is in door) I say! Mr. Robinson—I'll beg thy pardon; but what didst thou come here for, no how? If thou wilt just tell me, I'll tell no one.

Robinson: (coming in, hat in hand, closes door) My dear child, upon a most important, yet a most painful errand. Our manager, greedy for gain, announced this morning that the company would be expected to play during the Holy week! Master Edward refused to obey the call and I am sent to notify him of his immediate discharge. A Jester from the other side came at noon to fill his place in the company. I am sorry indeed, for I know how ambitious the lad is, and I know how hard it is to be out of work in England these hard times.

Edna: And thou? Wilt thou play during Holy week?

Robinson: Sure, and every other night when I can make a shilling! My religion is a fine one—it never interferes with me stomach. But its sorry I am for thy brother. He's a fine lad, with his heart in the right place. Me purse is small, but me right *arum* is at his service! Good day to ye marm! Good day! (goes out, closes door and then opens and puts in his head again) I say little one—[sees Edna weeping]—there! there! don't be after soiling thy pretty eyes! Tell Master Edward, when he comes, that there are seventy-five days in this month, and I've got thirty shillings coming to me—he's welcome to the half of it. [exit whistling on out side]

Edna: My good noble brother! I feel that he has done his duty. God will help us! [climbs up into chair—sighs—] I *reckon* He will help us! [dozes] I know he will help us! [dozes. Mrs. Mabb is heard coming, outside, cursing and growling] Listen! There comes Mrs. Mabb, and she is drunk and cross! [Gets out of chair] I'm so afraid of her when she comes home like this. But there! I must not be afraid! I'll *no* be afraid! As Edward says, "I'm a man! hem! hem! and *not* afraid to die! [loud knocking and rattling at the door—Edna is getting a chair to stand up in so she can unbolt door. Mrs. Mabb mumbling, knocking and kicking. Edna is talking all time she is opening door] Havn't I got a nice grandma! Hey! hey! hey! She does this about once a week. I think it very

wrong not to do just what you are told to do, especially when you have a *dear* good grandma like mine! I expect she will beat me. But then it don't hurt any longer than it is lasting. I'd like to see Edward before, [almost a whimper, standing up in chair to open door] before I open the door. Oh Edward! Edward! But there! hem! hem! I'll be a man! "Like a brave son of Sparta, I'll die a martyr." [One great effort and she unlatches the door. The door opens—the chair is upset and little Edna has been laid out on floor. Mrs. Mabb heeds nothing, walks over and comes down stage. Little Edna dares not move at first. She lies there slyly watching the old lady, then gradually crawls along on her hands and knees and gets under the table, where she strikes a very cute and safe attitude, watching old lady.]

Mrs. Mabb: Wheu! I'm so tired! Where—where is that she brat?

Edna: [under table—aside] "She brat!"—that's me!

Mrs. Mabb: [feeling for bottle] Where's that bottle! Where—where is it! I must have dropped it. [limping about room] Edward! Edward! I'll send for more. I wonder where Edna is? Edna I say!

Edna: [under table—aside] It's my time now. [aloud, timidly] Yes grandma dear! Here I am!

Mrs. Mabb: [looking under table] Er-law! Now what art thou doing under there! Come out, I say!

Edna: Did you say "come out?" Alright—I'm er comin'. I'm er comin'.

Mrs. Mabb: [catching Edna by the arm, gets switch and begins to whip her. Edna screams] Didn't I tell thee about hiding from me? I'll teach thee how to run from me. There—there now! Go shut that door and straighten up. Quit your sniffing and go. I'll teach thee how to play shy with me. [Edna is busied straightening room and shutting door. Stays at Mrs. Mabb's rear all time. Edna does many odd and funny little tricks while in her fit of pouts, behind Mrs. Mabb's back. But she is moved to pity and finally softens toward Edna] I say Edna.

Edna: Yes—grandmother.

Mrs. Mabb: Come here—where is Edward?

Edna: I don't know grandmother; he hasn't come home yet.

Mrs. Mabb: You "don't know?" You never know anything. You're a regular—"know-nothing." I'll teach Edward a new lesson when he comes home.

Edna: (aside) I wonder if she knows Edward has lost his place? (aloud) Grandma!

Mrs. Mabb: Well! What is it?

Edna: Brother has—has lost his—his position. (crying.)

Mrs. Mabb: Oh he has! he has? I told him so! I told him so! What has he been doing now?

Edna: He will tell you all about it when he comes.

Mrs. Mabb: Stop thy whimpering! I'm sick! I'm tired! (sits stage front in big arm chair) I—I must have more rum!

Edna: Grandma, wont you let me help thee remove thy bonnet and shawl? You must be very tired and very—very sleepy.

Mrs. Mabb: (crossly) I'm *not* sleepy, and I'm not tired.

Edna: (very kindly) Wilt thou not let me remove thy shoes, thy bonnet and thy shawl.

Mrs. Mabb: Take off my bonnet. Take it off! Quick I say—or I'll box thy jaws!

Edna: (taking off bonnet slowly and carefully, and when she goes back to put them away she stops at the mirror—tries on bonnet to admire herself) Yes, dear grandmother. I'll do all you tell me to do. I'm going to try to be a real good girl from now on. I know I have been very, very bad, but—you'll forgive me (patting old woman's face) Wont you grandmother?

Mrs. Mabb: I don't know? (snappingly)

Edna: I *know* you will grandmother. Thou art always good and kind to me—when *I* am *good*. May I take off thy shawl now?

Mrs. Mabb: (not quite so snappishly as before) No! no!

Edna: (draws back with fear and stares at her; then draws nearer and puts her arms around Mrs. Mabb—very kindly) Wont you let me take off thy shawl grandmother? I'm sure thou wilt feel better with it off. (Mrs. Mabb looks at her oddly but does not speak) There! (Edna carefully removing shawl) Thou art very kind to let me have my own way. (Mrs. Mabb figets at suggestion) Now grandmother thou wilt let me remove thy rubbers. It willl never do to keep them on in the house. (Mrs. Mabb looks at her oddly) Thou wouldst catch cold, and

that would be very sad to all of us. (Edna is trying to remove shoes)

Mrs. Mabb: (in great pain) Oh! oh! oh! Thou hast mashed my corns! Oh! oh!

Edna: . (kindly—hands on hips) I'm very sorry—very sorry! I did not mean to do it. I shall be more careful. (After removing shoes, and making Mrs. Mabb generally comfortable—sits on right arm of chair, affectionate as she proceeds to talk) Do you know grandmother, I had such a funny dream?

Mrs. Mabb: Well, don't be a telling it to me!

Edna: But it is not a very bad dream grandmother, and I'm sure you'll be glad to hear of it, if you'll listen to me. I dreamed such an odd dream. I thought—I thought we were all going away. Somewhere—I don't know just where. Such a *great big* boat, and there were so many people in the boat. And the boat had wings—great white wings. (she stops as trying to think)

Mrs. Mabb: (shows by expression she is anxious) Well! well! Go on!

Edna: (looking away off) And I dreamed you and Edward and me, and a great big rich man, and a pretty young lady were all waiting to get on the boat.

Mrs. Mabb: (clutching her side in agony) Oh! oh! oh! Ah me! Oh! oh! oh!

Edna: Why—what's the matter grandma? Can I do any thing for thee? (on knees at old lady's side)

Mrs. Mabb: No! no! Go on with the story, my child!

Edna: The rest of the story—is not very nice! Let's don't talk about it any more grandma.

Mrs. Mabb: Go on I say! I will have my way!

Edna: And the boat looked like a great bird, and the people on the boat looked like angels—all dressed in white. And when the boat stopped, we all went aboard, but thee and the rich man. The captain said *thou* couldst not go, because thou didst not have the coin to pay thy fare.

Mrs. Mabb: (desperate, trying to rise) It's a lie! a lie! We have got enough money to buy his boat!

Edna: (laughing gently) Why grandma it was only a dream! Beside, that's just what you told the man in the dream, but he said, "Not gold! not gold, but a pure soul is what we

ask!" (after considerable pause—hesitation on Edna's part) Grandma, I wish thou wert like a good old woman our story book tells about—go to church every Sunday, and sing and pray. Then, when thou diest, go to Heaven where mamma and Papa is.

Mrs. Mabb: (rising slowly—Edna is fixing bed) How the child talks! "Go to Heaven, where mamma and papa is." "Like the good old woman in the picture book." Ha! ha! ha! ha! [grasping side] Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Edna: [rushing to her side] What is the matter grandma! What ails thee? Must I go for a doctor?

Mrs. Mabb: No—no! Go!—prepare the bed. [Edna goes back to prepare the bed—aside] "Go for a doctor"—hump! No doctor can help me now. A sin-cursed soul sleeps for a moment in death—and awakes in everlasting torment. [turns, calls Edna] Edna! Edna I say—come!

Edna: Yes, grandma!

Mrs. Mabb: Bring me——water. [aside] I feel somehow, like it will all end here to-night. No! no! no! I'm not going to die! I'm strong yet. [tries to walk but has to clutch back of chair for support]

Edna: [bringing glass of water] Here's your water grandma:

Mrs. Mabb: [looking at her with wild glare] Water? I—did not ask for water! I will take it though. (Takes the glass in her hand—barely tastes it—makes wry face)

Edna: [aside] How kind the poor old soul is to-night. I really believe I love her!

(Here Mrs. Mabb hands back the glass to Edna—untouched.)

Edna: Drink the water grandma; it will make thee feel so much well-er.

Mrs. Mabb: It's too weak! Take it! Turn down my bed!

Edna: (tasting water at Mrs. Mabb's back) 'Tis rather weak. [said aside]

Mrs. Mabb: [aside] I'll try to sleep! To-morrow—to-morrow I shall—feel better. I'm going to lead a better life, to-morrow. I'll pray perhaps! Mayhaps too, I'll go to mass and see the priest. [pain in her side again] Oh! oh! Come! my child! Quick! Ah——

Edna: [at her side] Is there anything you want grandma? Is there anything I can do for thee?

Mrs. Mabb: No my child! You can do nothing for me! I am past all aid! Ah—what is that? That! that! Take 'em away!

Edna: What grandma? I see nothing! There is no one here but me.

Mrs. Mabb: Don't you see 'em? Look! look! I can see 'em! Everywhere! Look at their ugly, hideous faces! Take 'em off! Take 'em off! There now—go away! Go child—bring me rum! Away! Why dost stand there like stone! [to imaginary animals or persons] *Thou wilt get me rum—a good boy eh? Run now—bring me rum. Run away!* [screams] Take 'em away! Take 'em away! [falls on bed]

Edna: [leaning on bed side] Poor soul! Is there nothing I can do for thee? Grandma! Speak to me! Speak to me! Don't look like *that*, you frighten me!

Mrs. Mabb: [rises on elbow, face audience] Hast thou brought me rum? A good girl! Pretty little girl! Ha! ha! ha! Where is the rum? Ah——

Edna: [putting cover over her, making her easy] Dear old grand! She has such a hard time when she drinks like this. The snakes get after her. It was very cruel of thee to beat me so, (kisses sleeping figure) but I'll forgive thee. [sighing] We do have such a hard time some times. But when you get well again, we will try to be so much better. We will never quarrel again; I am going to be a good girl and not worry thee. No more quarrels and blows, and no more cross words. And every Sunday when the great bells ring, we will go to church and kneel in prayer, and try to be very good. Do you remember, grandmother, what the good lady read us out of her book? Let me see—something about, "forgive us our tresspasses as we forgive—" I can't—I can't remember the rest of it. [aside] I wonder if she is very—very ill? Perhaps I'd better ask God to make her well. I'll just kneel down here and say the prayer Edward taught me. [kneels at bedside]

Edward—"The Jester": [Heard out side, singing merrily—burst in door with high spirits] What, Ho, my jovial mates! [upon observing the atmosphere of matters, he changes into a most solemn and tragic mood—

How solemn seems the hour—
 No restless spirit, save I alone,
 Hath dared to venture forth.
 Yonder moon in palid glimmer,
 Doth 'pear to sink away,
 To welcome back the 'proach of day.

Now 'pon me soul this room doth wear the 'pearance of a grave yard. Hush! Hu-sh! Listen to the clock! Tick! tock! tick! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Well, if the little one aint fast asleep. Ah! ha! So I've caught thee knapping, my pretty maid. Ha! ha! Still asleep—I do declare! Sh—sh—sh!

Edna: Oh Edward! Thou naughty boy; I was saying my prayers! And grandma is very ill too!

Jester: Oh, thou wert! Wert thou? Well I must humbly ask thy pardon. Same old story—Limberga cheese and rum! "Poor old Catashaw." Come little one! Tell me what thou hast been doing all day. Was grandmother cross to thee—did she switch thee?

Edna: Did she? W—e—l—l—I guess! Just look at that! [removes stocking to show stripe]

Jester: No! I wont kill her to-night! What did she do it for?

Edna: Do what for?

Jester: Whip thee!

Edna: Oh pshaw! I don't know—it don't hurt now, so what's the difference. I say Edward! If I ask thee to do something for me, wilt do it?

Jester: What ist?

Edna: Wilt do it?

Jester: Ah! I know, don't I? Alright—I'll tell thee *just one*—now—now that's all—*just one*.

Edna: Just one? Tell me *two*!

Jester: Well, onest there was two little barkies!

Edna: "Barkies"—what's barkies?

Jester: Barkies? Why didst thou never hear of the barkies? The barkies—what goes [imitates a big dog] away out in-to the woods, and bites folks too, sometimes.

Edna: Oh! don't tell that one—tell—tell er nother one.

Jester: Alright! But that's a mighty fine tale, about the bow-wows and the barkies.

Edna: Ah, I don't want to hear it—it scares me.

Jester: Alright then—I'll have to tell another one. [amuses her with stories and nursery rhymes for about 5 or 10 minutes. She gets her story book, and they have a merry time over it, etc. At conclusion Edward remembers he has not had supper] Ah, I can tell no more tales—[rising] I'm tired! Come lets have the supper thou hast saved for me.

Edna: [standing in front of him, hands on hips] There aint no supper!

Jester: Thou shouldst say, "*there is no supper.*"

Edna: Well, "*There is no supper.*," Is your honor's appetite the less for the grammar? Wilt thou take water with it?

Jester: Hast *thou* had no supper?

Edna: No!—*I never eat.*

Jester: Well *I* do—sometimes. Here are three pennies. One—two—three—four! There! One loaf for thee, one for me, and one for "the sleeping beauty," and one for a bit of ale. Run now! Hurry! For I'm as hungry as a wolf. [Edna rushes about, gets pitcher]

Edna: [runs to door and stops] Hast thou not forgotten something Edward?

Jester: [puzzled] Oh! So I have—thou little brat! [catches and kisses her] Now hurry! [exit Edna] Half past two, and I'm hungry, tired and sick, and what's more, I am out of work. My position—gone. Ah well! Perchance 'tis all for the best—who can tell? At any rate, what's the use to mope and worry? One never suffers for what they know to be right. [a groan from the bed] Hello! What's that? Ah! same old game! Same old game! Poor old fool. If I were rich, I'd buy thee a barrel of rum and watch thee drink thyself to death. Rum and Limberga cheese; enough to kill a pole-cat. Let me feel thy pulse, "fair one," they [going toward bedside] should beat 70 times per minute, but thou art so stupid and lazy, I suppose 35 will answer for thee. [takes hand and drops it with great horror] Cold! Great Heavens! [feels her face and hands] Dead! [Walks the stage front and back to bed side] As dead as Hector! [after considerable pause] Well—that *do* settle it. [position, side way on table or chair] I would I could feel sorry. Would that I could shed one tear for thee, poor old Mrs. Mabb. (considerable pause along here) "My grandmother," Ha! ha!

ha! ha!—*that—that wont do!* Thou art a good player, but thou hast missed the allusion, on this great and mighty stage, in the drama of life. Lost the “cue”—as it were. My!—what a life thou hast led. [shudders] It must be a terrible thing to leap *so suddenly* into God’s presence to await His judgment. As the angels above sigh for thee, so doth all hell yearn for thee! [crosses over, looks at her thoughtfully, then picks up her hand] That withered, cunning hand has brought many an unjust blow down upon my back. Many a time has it struck my poor angel little sister when I was out into the streets earning bread for *us* and *rum* for *thee*. Those lips that are now hushed forever, have never spoken *one kind word* to me. I am *not* thy judge. For my part I forgive thee every unkind word and every blow, and wish—vainly wish that peace and comfort may come to thy poor deluded soul in the next world. (coming forward) Death! The last act in life’s great play! Whether it be a farce, or a comedy, or whether it be a drama or tragedy—it has its end, and the end is, Death. (and now pointing to the bed) A Parody! Behold the last act—the climax—death. The curtain in *her* play has fallen. (pause and thought) ’Twas a good production—of its kind. Where the actor goes after the play is ended does not concern thee nor I. (pause and thought) Thank Heavens, that we cannot see beyond the curtain! [Edna it heard singing outside] My poor innocent little sister! I sometimes wish she were dead and in Heaven where mother is. I feel that the role of father, brother, mother and companion is too great ~~for~~ me. How can I tell her what has happened!

Edna; (outside) Open the door for me Edward! (she enters when he opens the door, her arms and hands full—goes to table to put things down) Your majesty has grown impatient, eh? I ran all the way. (very busy) Well, we will have a dinner fit for a king in less than *three minutes!*

Jester: [at other side of table, standing thoughtfully as Edna prepares for the meal] Thou hast brought too much.

Edna: How so? One loaf for thee, one loaf for me, and one loaf for grandma—

Jester: “Grandma” will not dine with us to-day. She will feast with *friends* below—*her friends*.

Edna: [not understanding, but alarmed at Edward’s manner] Hey! hey! hey! My! What a “jag” she’ll have on her

[staggers to bedside, mimicing drunkard—at bedside] Grandma! Oh Edward! Edward! What is the matter with her! Grandma! Speak to me! Oh Edward, run quick for a doctor! Why dost thou not go Edward? Grandma! Don't look like that! Speak to thy little girl. It is me—Edna; dost thou not know me?

Jester: [goes and leads her to stage front—a picture, tableau—fall of curtain] Come away Edna.

[Curtain—Close 2d Act.]

ACT 3d—SCENE 1st.

ON THE LAWN—PICNIC SCENE.

Jester is heard in the distance. Enters stage back left with little Edna on his back.

Jester: [is first to speak] The very spot for an hours rest, and yonder too, is a beautiful spring that laughingly invites us. Will her majesty alight?

Edna: Come up!

Jester: Now thou wouldst not ride a free horse to death?

Edna: Oh! *Thou* art not tired.

Jester: Oh! Am I not? No! But I am afraid thou wilt get sea-sick riding so much. Jump down and run fetch us a draught from yonder brook. Here is the cup! (takes from girdle) Now run! Mind—do not fall into the spring!

Edna: Thou talkest to me as though I were a baby! (exit right)

Jester: (laughs gently and looking the way she went) Getting to be a great big girl, *thou art!* Poor child! Whatever am I to do with her? All my bad luck seems to come at once; the loss of my position at the play house, a funeral, and Heaven only knows what next. Ah well! I must not take matters too seriously—all will turn out for the best, as sure as there is a Divinity that shapes the end of man. If I can only make *her* happy, keep her well clothed and fed *I* shall be content. And that *sale!* My! I can't let that gentle, loving creature go for so small a sum as fifty thousand pounds! Why *she's* worth a hundred thousand pounds of any body's money. She's fine stock! Only one defect—*she loves me!* I know it. *She told me so!* Ah me!

—were ever so many responsibilities placed on one poor fool's back before? I hope not. Oh! It doesn't matter so much about me, but the women folks—Heaven bless them. I can't bear to see them suffer. Hard times are yet to come, making a living in the streets is no easy task. There is one great advantage that an actor and a monte-bank has over ordinary people—He is like a camel, can go for days without eating. He never eats unless it is convenient. [at the close of this speech he lay inclined, back to right of stage as Edna returns, slowly with brimming cup of water]

Edna: Here is the water! [passes cup to him over his shoulder and kneels at his back]

Jester: Thank thee my pretty maid! [drinks] Come now and lets rehearse our wits! Thou mayest begin. Art thou ready? Then take the position. (addressing an imaginary audience) "Ladies and gentlemen! Thou shalt now have the pleasure of hearing the youngest actress on the globe, Miss Edna Mabb, in her superb selection, titled——" [the Jester gives name of her selection, and when she finishes, applauds her with] Good! good! Come now and lets practise the dance!

Edna: Oh yes, the dance! the dance! I love the dance! (music)

Jester: Position! Ready! One-two-three! Back—left—right! Forward—One-two-three!

Edna: Oh! Thou didst forget the turn! Didst thou not?

Jester: Ah! Bless thee! So I did! Lets begin again. Now! Ready? One-two-three! Turn! [they dance. When they finish dancing Edward sits on mound or stump. Edna stands in attitude of rest, facing him]

Edna: Now how much dost think we will get for a turn like that, eh?

Jester: No more can I tell!

Edna: A half crown, maybe?

Jester: Maybe so we will! Maybe so we wont!

Edna: Six pence four—Eh?

Jester: [looking off left] Ah! See whom we have coming!

Edna: (getting to his back and looking over his shoulder) A rich man, maybe! Hey! [she prances about]

Jester: (rising) Be still—'tis the priest! [the priest comes

on left, back of stage. Edward removes his hat. Edna gets back of him]

Father Garbo: Ah! My children—a merry time to thee! To-morrow is a holliday; better save thy bright smiles until sunrise.

Jester: We have a goodly store father. Smiling is our trade.

Father Garbo: Smiling? How so? Ah I see! Thou art the lad whom men call "The Jester."

Jester: Thou speakest well, Father.

Father Garbo: And the little one—the sweet face?

Jester: Is my sister, Edna.

Father Garbo: Ah I see! I have heard much of thy misfortunes. My will is to do thee a good turn if thou wilt let me, my children. Now I will take the little one home with me to make the burden lighter for thee, lad; and if ever thou comest to want, my board and shelter are thine. [Edna clings to Jester at this suggestion. Looks up at Jester pleadingly]

Jester: Thou art doubly kind my father—but I cannot part with her. We have neither mother nor father—we are all the world to each other. [thought and pause] But if thou wilt shelter her until I can find a home fit for her, I shall be most grateful. She is not used to hardships and I fear for her welfare. [to Edna] Come little one! Wilt thou go with the good father until a few days have passed? I will come for thee!

Edna: [throwing arms about Edward] Must I go Edward? Is it best? Is—is it *thy wish*?

Jester: Only for a few days, and then I shall come for thee! Go now with the good Father. He will shield thee from all harm and give thee food.

Edna: And *thou*, brother—what of thee?

Jester: Do not fear for me dear. I shall join thee in a short time. Come now! Give me thy sweetest kiss and a big hug and then we part.

Father Garbo: (is affected) Come my little daughter! We will go first and get thee a new frock, (holding Edna by hand, advances to Jester) Fare thee well, lad!

Jester: (kneeling) Thy blessings father!

Father Garbo: May the blessings of the Holy Church be upon thee; and the mother of Holies keep thee from sin and evil. Amen!

Jester: Good bye! Good bye! My angel—Farewell, Father!

Father Garbo: Farewell!

Edna: [throwing kisses back as 2 exit left] Good bye Edward! Good bye! [Edward stands and watches them off, then returns and throws himself down on the ground. He speaks, after much pause and thought]

Jester: How still all is! Ah—what a drear, dark, close to my poor day! How could that red sun drop into that black cloud! All may yet for the best be proved. Does not the blackest cloud brighted at the sun's approach? Even so. Oh! I am ill—out of harmony with nature! 'Tis but the condition of the liver makes one sad. A little rest and a little sleep—all will then be well. God bless me, and help me smile to-night in spite of this sad heart. All services rank the same with *Thee*, Oh God! With *Thee* whose children all are we, best and worst, there is no last nor first. (sleeps—picnic crowd in distance singing. They enter right at back of stage. Young men in boating and tennis attire. Girls with flowers and baskets. Nina, Fay's maid is with the party. Fay is not with party. As they enter and cease to sing a young man speaks)

First Male: This is the place for us! Come let's lunch and then a song!

Omnes: No! Lets go further on.

Second Male: (discovering Jester asleep) Ho! Ho! My pretty fellow! (to comrads) I say! Come look what I have found!

Omnes: (and gather around) What? Let's see!

First and Third Females: How handsome he is!

Second Female: Who is he? Does any one know?

First Male: Why!—'Tis Edward, The Jester. Poor soul! Hush—be still lads. Perhaps we had best not wake him. They say it is a deal of bad luck he has had of late. The poor fellow must be worn and sad. (as Nina hears names of "Edward and Jester" she starts and says aside—"The Jester"—Fay's lover and the only man on earth that I care for. "Poor fellow," she says sympathetically, as she goes over to him. Her emotion overcomes her and she goes down to his side on her knee and tenderly smoothes his forehead and hair, speaking inaudibly. The crowd at one side do not, at first, see or notice her action. They

dismiss with mischief in all eyes but First Male, who seems to be Edward's friend and sympathizer.

First male: We had best leave him lads, and go on to another spot.

Omnes: No! no! We must make him dance and sing!

Second Female: Look! look all! Nina has fallen in love with him!

Omnes: Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Nina: (Nina stands up frightened) I pray thee, leave him thus.

Second Female: No! no! He must make sport for us! Who will wake him?

Nina: No one! This is my——friend! Leave him!

Omnes: "Thy friend!" Ha! ha! ha! ha! (their loud laughter wakes the Jester who does not notice any one particularly. He springs to his feet, brushing his eyes, trying to arouse himself, and to appear cheerful)

Jester: Ah lads! A jolly surprise this! (lads all shake hands with Edward and greet him heartily. Edward bows to the ladies)

Omnes: Give us a dance! Yes, give us a dance!

Jester: Thou wilt please to excuse me—I—I—thou wilt please to excuse me?

Omnes: No! no! We wont: A dance! A dance!

First Female: (coquetishly) Now wilt thou not please to dance for *me*?

Second Female: Yes! *Please do! Mr. Jester.* (the Jester takes a hand of each of the two girls and courteously presses them to his lips)

Jester: How could I refuse? (the crowd cheer, and clear a space; music strikes up and "The Jester" dances, and when he has finished, comes the applause; he gracefully bows. First male passes hat)

First Male: (putting in coin) Come lads, lets every man into the hat. (all heartily obey)

First Female: We too will help!

Omnes: Yes! We will all help!

Jester: Thank thee, kind friends—but do not this for me—I—I—

First Male: Friend—every man has his calling. You dance—we pay.

Omnes: He must take it! We will make him take it!

Jester: (as first male presents him with contents of hat) My poor words are too inferior to utter the sentiments of my heart.

First Female: (a little bold) We have heard that thou hadst been unfortunate—with all our hearts we wish thee well.

Jester: (bowing low) Speak gently of——*the dead*. But come friends! To the sound of sweet music, tread a measure with me!

Omnes: Agreed: What shall it be?

Jester: (after moment of thought) The "Dance on the Lawn!" We all know it! 'Tis merry Ireland's pride! (a cheer of agreement)

First Male: Lads! Choose thy partners! (three or four of the girls show signs of desire to dance with the Jester. All seem eager for him to choose. His eyes fall on Nina—who has been watching him intently for past few moments. He discovers her, and goes quickly to her)

Jester: Nina! I had not seen thee! Where is thy mistress. (Nina is delighted until he mentions her mistress. Now she is disgusted)

Nina: No! Thou didst not care to see *me*. 'Tis my *mistress* always!

Jester: Come! Wilt thou be my partner in the dance? (he takes her hand and leads her to join the circle)

"THE DANCE ON THE LAWN."

(To the tune of either, "Mignion York," "Dance in the Grove" or "Pretty as Can Be.")

At close of dance the crowd cheer and laugh, get baskets, etc., and go stage right, two and two, to the brook where they are to dine. Edward and Nina fall behind)

Jester: Wilt thou stay a moment? I would speak with thee.

Nina: Wilt thou not partake of the lunch? Thou art welcome.

Jester: No! My place is not with them. (leads her to grassy seat) Come sit here and tell me of thy mistress. What of Fay? Where is she—is she well?

Nina: Dost thou then truly love her?

Jester: "Love her?"—with all my soul. It is the only love I ever knew. It overwhelms me with a fearful happiness.

Nina: Thou art true to her?

Jester: "True?" As true as steel!

Nina: Thou wilt never love another?

Jester: Never! It is impossible!

Nina: (aside) He has it bad! (aloud) Wilt never woo another?

Jester: Never! I swear it.

Nina: Wilt never kiss another maiden?—Ever so fair?

Jester: Never! never! (rises and crosses stage, keeping step with his words) Never! Though she be as bewitching as the Egyptian Queen and as tempting as Eve.

Nina: Oh! ho! (aside) Let's see. (aloud) My mistress has a lover well to be proud of. Come! Be seated. I have news for thee. I came with yonder merry crowd, sent by my beautiful mistress to see thee and speak with thee. (Nina inches up closer and closer to Edward, and as she speaks puts her hand tenderly upon his arm)

Jester: (catching both her hands in his) Say on, Nina! What of her?

Nina: (earnestly and drawing closer yet) I pray thee be patient. Well, Sir Walter Hammond came to see her last evening—

Jester: The old beast! Did she see him?

Nina: No—she refused, but Sir John forced her.

Jester: The demon!—It was against her *will* she saw him?

Nina: Nay! She saw him not at all.

Jester: How?

Nina: My mistress is not to be ruled against her will. She pretended a swoon, and thus Sir Walter was cheated!

Jester: Ha! ha! ha! ha!—Ha! ha! ha! A woman up to date!

Nina: Ha! ha! Yes, she is indeed, a woman up to date. A woman of more than ordinary merit. The only woman I ever truly envied.

Jester: Thou shouldst not envy thy mistress, but thy mistress, fair one, should be proud of her maid. In beauty thou art not lacking. Thou hast a figure to catch any sensible man's eye.

All Cheap Side vain would take a peep into thy pretty eyes, and I——

Nina: (sadly and working on Jester's feelings) 'Tis not of beauty, of form, or nature's gifts I envy her. Oh no! Not that. But she has a lover who worships her, loves her with all his soul. A lover so true to her that not the seducing Egyptian Queen or the tempting Eve, could dissuade from her. So true is he, and I envy her——

Jester: Fair maid I——

Nina: No! no! Thou canst not understand me. Alone—unloved, no father nor mother, no brother—none—none to love. (the Jester is overcoming with emotion—turns away) Oh sir! If thou couldst only know how sad and lonely my life is—— (pretends to weep)

Jester: (aside) The Devil! (aloud, as he comes close to Nina's side, puts one arm around her and takes her hands) There! there! Do not weep! [on left knee, keeping his arm closely about her. Both her hands in his, her head is turned away or else down, to hide her face] *Don't be sad!* Count the world as thou wilt, I shall be thy friend, thy brother, thy—thy mother and thy—thy— *Don't weep Nina! Sweet one!* [looks about uneasily—rises, goes back of stage, looks left and right. Satisfied that no one is in sight]

Nina: [aside while he is back] Now I shall put him to the test and see how *true* my mistress' lover is. I'll wager he will try to kiss me. I'll lead him on, aye, but stop him where modesty raises her eye brows. [She resumes her pretence of sadness as he returns quickly]

Jester: [kneeling same posture, but more ardent] Do not weep! Thy bright eyes were not made for tears, but laughter. Come! Give me thy sweetest smile. I too, am motherless, friendless and homeless—an outcast. [considerable pause] Nina, wilt thou not give me *one smile*, that smile alone would make a prince of the meanest pauper. Even the touch of thy gentle hand fans the flame of manhood that burns in my breast.

Nina: [aside, somewhat alarmed] Ye Gods! What are men?

Jester: Wouldst thou then disdain to smile once for me?

Nina: If my poor smiles [putting her face very near his] could add to thy happiness I would smile forever.

Jester: Thou wouldst Nina? And I am most happy now. Now, for the first time, Heaven seems to smile on me. The breath that brings thy sweet words is like the air of Heaven and thy lips like the royal colors of a queen. Thy bright eyes are the stars and thy smile is the sun, and the rays of that sun drown me in a glorious light. (his lips are near to hers) One kiss, my sweet Nina from those lips——

Nina: (puts up hand and draws back) Nay! Nay! Sir, 'tis not fit thou——

Jester: (determined, drawing closes) 'Tis but thy maidenish modesty, men love such; one kiss, my sweet Nina and then——

Nina: (alarmed) Sir! How dare——

Jester: (catching her in his arms) I dare do all that becomes a man. (kisses her once)

Nina: (indignantly) Edward turn me free!——

Jester: [holding her, coolly] If there is freedom in England, thou hast it now. [kisses her despite her turning her head away] Thou art as free as a lark. [kisses her] And I am as happy as a lark. [kisses her] We are on——a lark. [kisses her]

Nina: [blushing—aside] My! What a predicament I am in! Caught in my own trap: [aloud] Oh, sir! Suppose some one should come! And see us thus!

Jester: Then I should be the most envied man in England!

Nina: I pray thee—let me go—why shouldst thou hold me thus? Thou dost not love me—I am alone and friendless. Wouldst thou take advantage of a poor weak girl? I pray thee, think!

Jester: Away with thinking! One cannot love and and think at the same time. [kisses her]—as it were.

Nina: Art thou sure that thou dost love me—love me truly?

Jester: By yonder moon, [starts to point, but forgets 'tis day time and there be no moon]—where ever it may be, I swear it!

Nina: [putting her arms about his neck, taking his face in her hands most affectionately] Swear not, I pray thee. But if thou dost truly love me, come! Stand upon this bench. [leads to bench] Now if thou dost love me, swear upon thy honor,

thou wilt not get down from thy standing place until I have told thee a fable.

Jester: [surprised, but says] I swear—upon my honor! And upon the bench!

Nina: [seats herself upon a rock or mound, playfully and mischievously toys with sun hat, held by streamers] 'Tis an old story—too truly sad. A warning to all maidens who trust their lovers. Moral—In God we trust—lovers we must watch. Two lovers there were, seemingly true. He swore by the stars and the moon, by sun and shadow his heart was true! Not even the Egyptian Queen, with all her seductive arts, not even tempting Eve in her beautiful garden could persuade him to prove untrue to his love. Thus he swore, and——

First Female: [voice in distance] Ni—noo! Ni—noo! [Nina goes back of stage, waves kerchief or hat] Ni—noo! Ni—noo!

Nina: [to voice stage left] I am coming! [to Edward] So—a few days past. And this modest, sworn lover—forgot his oath. It took no Egyptian Queen or sirene of histrionic beauty and passion to sway him. But he chanced to meet—Nay! Nay! Sir—do not get off thy stand—remember thy oath to stand. This youth of undying love and sworn fidelity was dethroned by the poor silly maid of his mistress!

Jester: Nina! Nina I must—I shall get down!

Nina: Nay! Remember thy oath to me!

Jester: [aside] The devil!

Nina: Ha! ha! ha! ha! Now tell me, modest young gentleman, what thinkest thou the deserts of such a fickle youth? Dost think he was——

Jester: —Yes, I think he was a blamed fool!

Nina: Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Jester: And so was the maid that tempted him.

Nina: Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Jester. I want to get down. I'm going to get down.

Nina: Remember thy oath and thy honor sir!

Jester: Oh—— [sinks down on bench with a groan]

Nina: [aside and drawing near to him] Poor fellow! I am too harsh with him. I'll make amends. [to Edward] 'Tis a hard lesson thou hast learned. A lesson thou shouldst never forget.

Jester; (aside) Now that I am free, by Jove, I'll teach thee a little dance. (to Nina) Come! Little rogue—sit here. By my soul—ha! ha! ha! ha!—thou knowest human nature like a book. (Nina sits on end of bench, Edward grows sad and serious) But there are some natures thou canst not unfathom. For instance, thou believeth me in love with thy mistress. Tut! tut! How little thou knowest of love and its ways. Then again thou deemest me of a happy spirit. Ah Nina—if thou couldst but see the dark temptest in my heart. 'Tis my trade—smiling. I must smile even when my heart is breaking, or else go a begging for my bread. Earth has been like a hell to me. When the day came I longed for night, and when 'twas night I wished the day. Restless, friendless—life has been a burden to me. (Nina's head is bowed—he has his back to her. She draws closer to him and puts a hand on his shoulder—low music) But it was not ordained 'ever to be thus. Even the ray sandy desert has its oasis. So into my life came another life. Her mistress approved me, and bade me go win her love. Nina, dost thou not know why she has sent thee hither to-day? Ah Nina (putting arm about Nina) she knows how I love thee. Dost thou see the trick? 'Twas very simple.

Nina: Can it be true?

Jester: It is true. I love thee Nina. (draws her close)

Nina: Oh Edward! 'Tis so much like a dream. Art sure there is no mistake? Thou lovest me?

Jester: With all my heart!

Nina: And I—Edward I have loved thee long. (Edward puts her head on his bosom) I am happier now than I ever was. Some one to love. Some one cares for me.

Jester! Yes! Oh yes. (change of mood)

Nina: So happy I shall be now! Forgive me, Edward, the way I teased thee.

Jester: Why certes!

First Female: (without) Ni-noo! Ni-noo!

Nina: (breaking loose from Edward) Some one is coming.

First Female: (enter right, back stage) Why, here thou art! Come! Lunch is spread and I am sent in search of thee and Master Edward.

Nina: (to First Female) Very well dear. I am sorry to

have kept thee waiting. Go—say we come.

Jester: [interrupting] Thou wilt make excuse for me—I cannot be with thee to-day. I must away to the city.

First Female: Off to see some pretty maid, thou rogue! Oh, I know thee! I'll wager thou hast a dozen sweethearts!

Nina: [quickly] Oh no, he has not!

First Female: Ah——! [slyly—goes off right a little and waits unseen]

Nina: Wilt thou not come with me Edward?

Jester: I cannot to-day. I have duties.

Nina: I shall soon see thee again?

Jester: Certes! On the lawn, thou mayest hear from me—

First Female: [without] Ni-noo! Ni-noo!

Nina: [answers call] Yes—dear! I come presently! [to Edward] Adieu love. [Edward takes her in his arms]

First Female: [without] Ni-noo! Ni-noo!

Nina: [ans.] I come anon sweet friend! [to Edward] Thou wilt not forget me Edward?

First Female: [without] Ni-noo!

Jester: Forget thee? never!

First Female: Ni-noo! Ni-noo!

Nina: I come! Again Adieu! [Edward kisses her] Before the change of moons, we shall meet again?

Jester: Even so, and sooner.

First Female: (without) Ni-noo! Ni-noo!

Nina: (answers) I come! (to Edward) Be true to me! I love thee—with all a woman's heart! (puts up her face for Edward to kiss, then runs right-back stage, exit)

Jester: [dropping down on bench, very thoughtfully—face to audience] Well, I—wonder!

Nina: (returning hastily) Edward dear, I did forget a most important matter. This purse my mistress bade me give to thee and say, "be patient."

Jester: No! no! no! I can not!

Nina: Thou art a proud lad! But keep the purse—'tis her will—and mine.

Jester: I *must* not! I will not!

Nina: Nay, but 'tis my wish; thou must obey! Adieu! (exit right)

Jester: Mephisto!—Faustus! The devil! (opens purse

slowly and thoughtfully—kisses purse before opening—takes a card and reads, “Be true and patient.” Great pause. Then rises slowly, pausing, thoughtful and says] “Be true and patient.” (Interior closes)

SCENE II—ACT III.

Different people in different moods. The picnic party homeward bound. Enter stage left talking and singing, pass leisurely across, exit stage, right. Enter Nina stage left, closely following party. Slowly.

Nina: Ah! What a happy day this has been for me! Love and loved! So much have I to thank Heaven for. I scarce know how to begin. This happiness is new to me—it scares me. I feel guilty—afraid to face my dear mistress. But whence this fear? Have I sinned—and how? I will hurry to my mistress. (discovers Fay who comes in right stage to meet her) She comes to meet me! And *she* knows how Edward loves me?—and how I love him?

Fay: [embracing Nina] See Nina, I have come to meet thee! My impatience for news of Edward would not let me wait. Tell me all about my loved one! Is he well? Is he happy? Does he love me—tell me, Nina!

Nina: (staring at Fay coldly and abstractly) Love thee! Who—loves thee?

Fay: Why—my Edward; didst thou not do my bidding? Speak!

Nina: (blandly—abstractly, with effort) Yes—thou dost love—him, didst thou say? Oh yes—he—he—

Fay: (frightened) Why Nina, dear, what ails thee? Come lets into the house! (going, Fay’s arm about Nina tenderly) Art thou ill?

Nina: I gave him—the purse. Oh Fay, my head—aches. (exit right; as soon as Fay and Nina exit, enter the priest and Sir John Mortimer, stage left.)

Sir John: All I have told thee, is quite true Father.

Father Garbo: But hast thou told me all, my son?

Sir John: All father—quite all.

Father Garbo: The church can grant thee pardon for such sins for five hundred pounds.—*Heaven* will pardon thee *too*, if thou wilt repent, and make amends.

Sir John: Five hun——! Gracious Father of the Holy Church, that sum ought to carry me to Paradise.

Father Garbo: Less would carry thee to everlasting torment, to crawl and squirm on burning coals. It is for thee to choose John Mortimer. Wilt thou pay to the church and repent or wilt thou go on to destruction? Come! Thy answer——Heaven or Hell? Which shall it be?

Sir John: Give me time to consider——good Father.

Father Garbo: No time is to be lost when a soul is at stake. To-morrow's sun may find thee a corpse. Answer now! Which shall it be?

Sir John: Give me but an hour, to consider!

Father Garbo: Your answer now!

Sir John: Five hundred pounds! Aye, 'tis a goodly *sum*! Five hundred—why—'tis a small *fortune*—well *worth considering*, good Father.

Father Garbo: Your *answer*! Now!

Sir John: Good Father! I might perchance say "hell"—whereas, if I had time to consider, I might pay, and repent and say, "Heaven."

Father Garbo: Ah! Foolish, weak man! Death already has its grip on thee! No time is to be lost. Choose *now*! Which shall it be, John Mortimer, Heaven or Hell? (at this period, Mortimer's pain, gout or rheumatism is intense, causing him to lose patience. He hobbles toward stage right, leaving the priest, who watches him. Mortimer, out of patience and in pain utters an oath)

Sir John: Oh! Hell! (the priest outraged and angry starts left stage) I may change my mind! (priest stops) Thy *price* is too high.

Father Garbo: It will be too late! The church will not be tampered with! Farewell! (exit left)

Sir John: Holy Father! Stay! I—I will *give* thee three hundred. (sees priest has gone) He's gone! Well——let him go! I've paid enough to the church already. The church will break me! I'd as leave to be in *hell* as to be penniless in England! I had! I—had! (exit right)

Here the slides open and shows up scene in the attic, the Jester's home)

SCENE III—ACT III.

Interior. The Jester's lodging. A few old broken chairs and old table. A bowl and spoon and one or two dishes on table. A door back left of stage. The Jester discovered in chair left of table in shirt sleeves, elbow on table, head resting in hand. Little Edna in the rude bed at back of room. The Jester sighs.

Edna: Edward give me some water please.

Jester: Yes darling! [gives her water]

Edna: Thank thee brother; thou art so kind to me.

Jester: (coming back to table) Poor child! She has tossed in fever all night long. (seated) What a world this is! Sometimes I wonder if it is the world, or if it is me, that is so out of tune. Ah—well! (rising, goes to cupboard to find food) Only one little piece of bread left—I have eaten nothing since last night! Nothing more to pawn! Costumes—all are gone, and now we are penniless and without food. One loaf! I *must* eat it! (pause) Eat it up from *her*? No!

Edna: Come here by me, Edward.

Jester: What is it little one?

Edna: I am *so* hungry! *So* hungry?

Jester: See! Here is food for thee! I—I have food for thee: (goes to her)

Edna: I can't eat that Edward. It is too hard. Get more.

Jester: (aside) She can't eat *this*? The third time she has refused it. (he breaks it and bites ravenously. A knock is heard at door) Who can be coming *here*! (goes to door, opens it) Well—what is it? (paupers beg bread) You would have bread—food to keep life? (pause) Yes! yes! I will give it thee! I will give thee food. [produces the loaf] Here is life—go eat! [he shuts the door, comes near to bed and says] Little one! We will starve together. [staggers on weakly toward table to chair] The end—can't be far. One day more and sweet relief will come, in form of death! [Edna's cry for food is heard] *That cry again!* Oh Heaven! Have pity—'tis driving me mad! Her cries torture me, cut me like a knife. The skeleton hand of Poverty holds it lighted candle to show me the darkness that lies in my soul. My hat! My cloak! [gets them on—pause] *Where* am I going? To exhaust my strength with more

vain trying? No! I am *Eng'land's Slave!* She *must*—she *shall* feed me! [exit door]

Edna: [in answer to loud knock at door] Come in! [knock] Come in!

Nina: [accompanied by James who carries basket] Well James, this is one of the worst. I thought I heard a voice. [looking around] I see no one.

James: [at bedside] Here it is—I have found it! Te—he! te—he!

Nina: [going to bedside] Ah—my dear!

Edna: [slowly] Is there anything I can do for thee?

James: We've come to feed thee! Te—he! te—he!

Nina: Yes my dear. I have come to bring thee food. [to James] James, keep silent

Edna: Well, I guess I'm at thy service. [rising] What's that thou hast brought with thee? [pointing to James]

Nina: Come, James! Bring the basket. [as she arranges table] Where are the rest of the family? How many are in your family?

Edna: The rest of the family have—— (clutches at chair; is weak—falls)

Nina: (to her aid) Why, dear, what ails thee? Thou art ill!

Edna: The rest of the family; there aint but two of us—have gone out. I'm not exactly ill, just need a little gruel to brace me up. [spies the basket of food and makes a dash for it] Say, if it is not a secret, my good fellow, what hast thou in the basket? (seizing a bowl of gruel and a loaf) Food—by gravy! (gets flat down on floor and goes to eating. Nina and James look on dazed) I say, my lady—I'll be with you later. I say! My good fellow!

James: Te—he! te—he! te—he! te—he.

Edna: (dumb founded, looking from Nina to James) Hey! hey! hey! It's funny aint it? What's to laugh at?

James: Te—he! te—he! I wasn't laughing.

Edna: Ah! ah! ah! Darest thou lie to me, boy?

Nina: Where is thy mother, little one?

Edna: (busy eating) Don't kno—op! Never had any!

Nina: Strange! Where is thy father, then?

Edna: Don't kno—op! Never had none of them neither.

Nina: Well, who lives here?

Edna: Me!—— Me and my brother—Mr. Edward Mabb, Esquire, Junior, whom men call “The Jester.”

Nina: [starting at this revelation] “Edward?”——“The Jester”? Is he thy brother, child?

Edna: Y—e—s! He’s a mighty good brother too.

Nina: (aside) Heavens! (to Edna) Where is he?

Edna: (interested) Well, I don’t know exactly. Don’t owe thee or Mr. James anything does he? [getting up and going to James at table] I say, Mr. James—wilt thou leave a little of this re—cu—per—a—tion for my brother? He will be back in a while and *he’s* hungry as *me*.

James: Great Holies! Te—he! te—he! te—he!

Edna: “Great Holies! Te—he! te—he! te—he!” Boo! Boo!

Nina: Yes my dear, we will leave thee a supply. Come, tell me all about thy brother. [to James] James, wait at the carriage for me. [exit James, laughing] How long, little one, hast thou been without food? And where can Edward be?

Edna: [on table still eating] Well, its been about—a long time since we had *much* to eat. Edward lost his place at the play house and he has not been very well. He can’t sleep. Sits up in a chair all night. Then *I* got sick and he had to buy some medicine for me. *He* don’t get hungry much—gives it all to me. We have been living here ever since old grandma died. Oh! She was *awful* mean—cussed, got drunk and *beat me*! We are awful glad she’s dead too.

Nina: How long has thy grandmother been dead?

Edna: Don’t kno’— Dont care—glad of it! How come thee to be here? Who sent thee?

Nina! God sent me.

Edna: Hey!—did he? I’m awful glad of it—wish he’d sent thee sooner. Will He send thee again? Art thou his *daughter* or his wife?

Nina: He is *my Father*, and a good Father he is.

Edna: Did he give thee clothes?

Nina: Aye! And more too! I was an orphan, poor and friendless and he cared for me, and comforted me.

Edna: Whew! Must be awful rich. Do you say your prayers every night before you go to bed?

Nina: Yes, dear; and often in the day.

Edna: Lots of trouble aint it? I say *my* prayers *sometimes*—God don't give *me* anything.

Nina: Aye, but he will—some day. He knows what is best for thee. We are all His children. He *loves* us.

Edna: Does he? (a little surprised. Puts bowl aside. Wipes her mouth and gets slowly down from table—very serious and thoughtful) I know a little prayer. Edward taught it to me. (pause, a little embarrassed because Nina does not speak or look at her) Lady—good lady, wilt thou let me kneel here by thee and ask God something? I—I wont soil thy dress.

Nina: (kissing her) Certainly darling.

Edna: (kneels, Nina's face radiant with happiness. *Her* prayer is a silent one—slow music) Dear God, we are awful poor. We have no father, no mother. We havn't got much of anything. We don't want *very* much. When you get through helping the rich people and the fine people, and if there is anything left, wont you give some of it to us? Edward says mamma and papa are up there where you are. *They* can tell you all about us. Dear God, thou wilt not let us starve, wilt thou? And wilt thou not give us a friend, just like this lady. She's awful kind and pretty, and *she* hasn't got any father nor mother neither. I believe that's all dear God. If Mrs. Mabb is up there, please don't tell her that I broke the yellow soup bowl. She'd be awful angry. And now dear God, let us come and live in Heaven where papa and mamma is—when we die. Oh dear God, you have *so many* poor little boys and girls to look after and to feed. Please *don't forget us*. Amen! (Nina puts her arms about Edna and kisses her)

[Curtain on Act 3.]

ACT 4th—SCENE 1st.

A road scene—enter the Jester stage left; shows signs of a conflict; exhaustion—stealthily takes a bottle of stimulents from under his coat—drinks. Shows signs of feeling better.

Jester: Thanks to England! Here's to her health! And here is a loaf too for the little one. Ah——! What a tussle I had with that fat baker; he threw me down, but when he thought to sit on me, I was gone! Ha! ha! ha! What merry times we poor devils do have! (sees some one coming r) Some

one coming! (hides bottle and loaf in his coat)

James: (running in stage right) I say sir, canst thou tell me where Father Garbo is? Sir John Mortimer is dying and cries for the Priest!

Jester: What wants he with the Priest—he is not dead *yet* is he?

James: Oh no sir! Te—he! te—he! He wants to confess his sins. He is going to die—wants to confess.

Jester: (aside) Wants to confess. Perhaps he knows who my father was. I shall never forget that night on the lawn with Sir John. (aloud) Thou didst say, Sir John is dying, my good fellow?

James: We think he is sir; about once a week we think he is going to die—but he disappoints us. It is my duty to run for the Priest, and when he comes Sir John fills him up on wine and sends him home. Te—he, etc.

Jester: (laughs) Now do thou run back my good fellow; I am young and swift of foot. I'll have the Priest at Sir John's bedside in half the time!

James: Thanks! Thanks! But dost thou know where Sir John lives?

Jester: The castle on Hamilton road—the great one with the lawn.

James: (going) Thou sayest right sir. Thou art a gentleman! Te—he! te—he! (exit r)

Jester: "A gentleman." That comes with *granting* a favor. Had I *asked* a favor, he would have called me a fool—vagabond. *He*, the *slave*, would have called me this? Yes, every one seems to have a right to curse the poor! (said sadly) But come, 'tis not the time now to tarry. *Every* man has his chance! Why what right has a man to place himself above his fellow creature and say, "*I* am better than thou?" Weaker men than I have slept on the purple couch; though stronger men have found peace only in death! 'Tis chance! Chance! And every man has a chance! *I must hear that confession*. But how? *I have it!*—have I not impersonated men, both great and lowly, at yonder play house? Aye, I have lived their very lives in mockery. So to-night, I'll play the Priest with a gentle, holy heart, though it do land me in London Tower! The Jester—the fool versus Priest! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Methinks I have missed my calling.

I should have been a fat Friar. Had Fate played a different game, jesters would have been monks, and monks would have been angels. Mephisto!—exit Jester! enter Priest! (business) Have I not always possessed a most solemn mien. (mimic) (laughs) What Priest can doff a cup of wine more gracefully than Edward, the Jester. (drinks from the bottle) Priest? Nay, I should have been a merry Pope. [laughs] Never too late, to-night I'll make my debut as Father Garbo at Sir John's death bed! [going left] First, this loaf and wine to the little one, then away to the chapel! I know his room—creep noiselessly in, steal his gown and crucifix, then back again as fast as my legs will carry me! Ha! ha! ha! Oh! I'd rather be a Jester than a king! [runs left, exit laughing heartily]

Jack Robinson: [enter r, intoxicated and drinking from bucket] Sure and this is the longest day I've ever seen. I wonder what time it is. [drinks] Empty! But it's me that's full. Sure and I'd like to sell the bucket. I wonder what time o'day it is! Here comes a nice gentleman. I'll ask him the time o'day. [enter well-dressed gentleman—walks across the stage, pays no heed to Jack, exit] Good mornin' to thee this evening. It's a very fine evening this morning. I say, can ye tell me what time o'night it is? Thanks! One of Edison's walking dress figures. Latest invention! Ah! Here comes a pretty body. Sweet little school girl just from school. [rough old woman enters r] Ah there! My pretty maid, laid in shade! I beg thy pardon. Canst thou to me tell the time o'day?

Old Woman: Can ye tell me how many days in this week?

Jack: About ten, if I remember right. Wait—let me think.

Old Woman: Are ye going to think? Don't—ye'll drop dead!

Jack: Ah—go to school! Now let me see—there are seventy-five days in this month, and I've got twenty shillings coming to me. I say, let me sell ye these buckets.

Old Woman: *Those* buckets?

Jack: Well, now that's what I predicted. Don't stand there and stare at me! I'm no bucket shop.

Old Woman: Why, ye haven't got but one bucket there! Thou art a cheat. What wilt thou take for it?

Jack: Thou art another! There are eleven buckets!

Old Woman : Well, I only see one.

Jack : Well I fell down eleven times, and every time I got up I picked up a bucket.

Old Woman : Good day sir! My time is valuable! (exit l)

Jack : So is mine! But the government pays for my time. (bus) Not drunk, but drinking! (sings and try to dance) I say, old boy, stand up; folks will think thou art drunk. (dances) I'm drunk! I'm drunk and I'm glad of it.

(The Jester enters l, disguised as priest, goes up to Jack, slaps him on the back) Och! Holy Father, and is it thee—your—your majesty! (bows, removes hat—goes down on one knee)

Jester : Jack Robinson, it is a most unholy life thou art leading; spending thy money for drink, while the poor starve around thee.

Jack : Sure Holy Father, and I gave me last shilling to the poor.

Jester : To whom gavest thou money, raiment or food, my son?

Jack : I helped 'em all, good Father. I helped—Edward, the Jester—

Jester : Stop! My son, thy tongue speaketh false! Thou liest! For in yonder garret, Edward, whom men call the Jester, and his little orphan sister are starving for bread. Up, and away! And may the devil fly away with thee, if thou changest not thy ways!

Jack : (trembling) Yes, Father!

Jester : Thou hast broken the commandments! (as Jester makes accusation : Jack all in a tremor, answers, "Yes, Father!") Thou hast stolen! Thou hast lied! Hast thou ten pounds? Well, give it to me! I am waiting. Ten pounds, I say!

Jack : [breaking and running off left] Yes Father!

Jester : [laughing heartily and going off r] Now for confession number two!

ACT IV.—SCENE II.

The confession. Sir John's room. [Sir John in invalid chair or on couch stage r. near front. Room elegantly furnished. A large curtained exit b. c. and side door l. c.] Sir John discovered in chair, eyes closed as asleep. Lady Mortimer seated

at table c. and James standing at door b. c.)

Lady Mortimer: James! A glass of water.

Sir John: Is the Priest coming?

Lady Mortimer: Yes dear; do be quiet.

Sir John: James! James! I say, is the Priest coming?

James: Yes, my Lord!

Sir John: How? Did I not tell thee how to address me? Don't dare call me "my Lord" again!

Lady Mortimer: (coming to Sir John's side) Go away James. Do be quiet John. Thou wilt wreck thy nervous system. (James gets in his laugh as he stands in b. c. door)

Nina: (enters door b. c. in walking costume, hat, etc.—leads little Edna by hand—little Edna in same ragged costume. Nina motions to Lady Mortimer who joins her near door. They converse in whisper, pointing occasionally to Edna who is busy looking at the walls and furniture. Lady Mortimer stoops and kisses Edna. Edna makes a wry face and wipes away the kiss with sleeve. Nina takes Edna by hand now, and going towards the door l. c. says) Come little one! This way! (exit door l. c. Edna somewhat reluctant as she is looking back at the room and Sir John)

Sir John: Oh! Why don't the laggard come on? I say! Lady Mortimer, come here. Yesterday I had some words with Father Garbo, made him angry; perhaps he will not come.

James: (at door b. c.) My Lord, the Priest comes! Te—he! te—he!

Sir John: Show him in! Show him in! (the Jester stands in door b. c. at the words. Lady Mortimer bows in reverence before him) The laggard Priest! (falls back, exhausted)

Jester: (deep voice) Hold! (come b. c. of stage) And is it thus thou wouldst address a Priest of the church of Rome? The Priest, from whom alone thy forgiveness may come? (to Lady Mortimer and James) My children, go thou in peace; I would be alone with Sir John. (exit James). But stay, my daughter; bring hither wine and lunch—lunch for two—

Lady Mortimer: (surprise) Lunch for two—Father? (Sir John's couch or chair has back to stage r. c., thus he is unable to see what is going on. He is too weak and scared to raise up and look around)

Jester: (coquetishly) Nay not, "two Father," but lunch

for *two*, and plenty of good wine. Now come, my child, know that the church must be obeyed. Ha! ha! (bus. with Lady Mortimer; arm around her; Sir John grows restless. When Lady Mortimer puts her head on Jester's breast, James puts head in door b. c.)

James: (aside) Holy Moses! Adam and Eve! (gets off laugh—exit)

Jester: Now tell me my pretty child, how is she—the other—thy pretty daughter Fay?

Lady Mortimer: Almost a grown woman now Father, and growing prettier every day.

Jester: Like her mother, eh? (bus) *My angel child!* Indeed now, 'pon my faith, one might mistake the mother for the daughter. (bus) Young, eh? Pretty, eh? Such eyes and such lips! (kisses her)

James: (putting head in door, speaks, exits) Getting young in his old age, eh? Hugging little angels, Te—he! te—he!

Lady Mortimer: Oh thou art a *dear good* Father to us. (exit b. c.)

Jester: [aside] Wouldn't she make a gay widow! Hem! Hem! Oh! I had quite forgotten the defunct member of the firm. (to Sir John) My son, thou has sent for me? I am here!

Sir John: (with fear) Thou art not angry with me, Father?

Jester: (aside) That's a fact, I *am* angry. [aloud] My son, thy sins against thy fellow creature and the church, are many. [Sir John pretends to cry] How! canst thou hope for forgiveness with no penance but tears?

Sir John: I have money. I can buy. I have lands and tenants, I will give liberally to the church. [The Jester during this speech wanders curiously about the room. Discovers a mirror. Business] The church has pardons to sell. I will *buy* not *beg*. How much, Father, must I pay to receive full forgiveness? How much?

Jester: [at l. c. bus.] Oh! About one thousand pounds. [loses his character at times] [aside] I wonder if that's too much!

Sir John: Too much! Quite too much good Father.

Jester: [his mind not on Sir John] Too much? Then

I'll take off a little. [wipes a little powder or rouge from his face]

Sir John: Do I pray thee, Holy Father.

Jester: [coming r c to Sir John's side] My son, long hast thou tampered with the church. I had sought to make death and the future easy for thee. [quickly] But I can name no terms until I have heard thy full confession.

Sir John: Good Father, I told thee all when we were together last. [Jester is staggered, but collects himself] I told thee all!

Jester: Dost thou think to deceive the Holy Priest? My son, there is a greater power than that of man. An Omnipotent Father, who knows our every thought and deed. Thou canst trick *mankind*, but the High Power—never! Confess thy sins now, e'er 'tis too late!

Sir John: [weak] I *will*, good Father—I will.

Lady Mortimer: [b c door with tray] Holy Father.

Jester: Yes, my love! Thou art a good soul. [takes her tray] As soon as *he* is gone, I shall hold a consultation with *thee* my child. Go now, we must be alone. [exit Lady Mortimer—Jester laughs, puts chair to table, sits down to eat and drink—Sir John groans, Jester remembers him] Oh—ah—hem! Now I am ready my son, proceed?

Sir John: Shall I begin from the first?

Jester: [eating, his mouth full] Y—e—p!

Sir John: My father was Lord Mortimer, owner and Lord of Downer Castle. He had three children—a daughter and two sons. The daughter's name was Edna and the *other son* was christened Calvin. The daughter died at the age of fifteen, leaving only two to share the estate with our mother. Calvin, my brother, was my father's favorite—a wild, reckless sort of a chap. People say he was much like my father when *he* was young. Calvin and I never agreed upon any subject—he was too merry. I don't like fools. I like sturdy men. I was older than Calvin, his ways were not suited to mine. I was an older and a wiser man. He was a *lucky* dog. I always thought the estate unequally divided, but I was too wise to complain. Soon after Lord Mortimer's death, his good widow died. We suspected her property would be divided between Calvin and myself, but not so. She was a cunning old cat. Calvin had in the meantime

married the Earl of Rockford's daughter. Calvin was a lucky dog. Beside being the owner of great estate, he was the husband of Fay Mortimer, the most gentle and the fairest woman in England. She refused my hand to accept Calvin. Two children were born of Calvin, the lucky dog; a boy christened Edward and a girl—Fay. Well, as I was going to say, the old lady, our mother, had unbeknown to us, made a will, in which she gave all her possessions to Calvin's oldest child, the boy, Edward Rockford Mortimer. This angered me. I lost control of my temper, but thou wilt forgive me good Father?

Jester: [pours out wine] Oh—small matter, certainly! Go on.

Sir John: I lost control of myself, and determined to satisfy my ill humor. I went about to raise a large sum of money, with which I intended to buy the land surrounding my brother's estate—

Jester: [aside] Wanted the earth. [drinks]

Sir John: —If I could have succeeded in buying the surrounding lands, I could have shut him in and thus put an end to his good luck. My finances were low. I went to Calvin to borrow a sufficient sum, saying what I had was under mortgage, and I wanted one hundred thousand pounds. He could easily have spared me this—he was the richest Lord in all England. We were walking through the deer park. I lost my temper when he refused to let me have the sum I asked. We came to words, then to blows and I—I—

Jester: [all intensity, springs to his feet. Little Edna, who has peeped into room [door l c] several times, slips in and gets under table, unseen by the two men. Bus. of reaching up on table and getting bread. She hears all. Nina soon appears in same door and listens] Well! What didst thou?

Sir John: It was an accident good Father! I—I loved my brother, but my sword slipped, good Father, and pierced Calvin's heart.

Jester: Thou didst murder him? Oh! Cain! Cain!

Sir John: Be not harsh with me good Father; the sin weighs heavily on my soul. Grant me pardon. I'll give thee great wealth.

Jester: [tears] Pardon, for the murderer of my innocent—of thy brother. [Madly clutching blade from table] Yes, here

it is! Here it is! I'll give it thee—

Edna: (as Jester appears to strike—goes noiselessly to him, takes the blade and says) Brother! (goes l. c. door to Nina, both outside)

Jester: Go on, lets hear the end. I am calm.

Sir John: I was never suspected of the murder. One of his tenants was hanged for the crime.

Jester: Another murder upon thy accursed soul!

Sir John: I found Calvin's will and changed it—thereby making his widow and two children penniless. But I proposed to do well by them, offered to take care of them in my home.

Jester: Yes, with Calvin's money.

Sir John: The beautiful Fay, who once rejected me as a lover, *hated*, aye, *suspected* me. She was too proud to eat my bread—wandered away and in three short weeks she followed Calvin.

Jester: Another murder upon thy soul! (aside) My poor mother.

Sir John: I took the two children into my care, intending, good Father, to do well by them when they were of age. In the mean-time my wife, Lady Mortimer, gave birth to a girl. My brother's children were noisy, and as my wife was of a nervous temperament. I determined to send them away. My wife commanded me to do so. The idea of a female heir, angered me. I was determined to get rid of my own child too. But, when the time came to dispense with the three children; the little daughter of my brother, with her great tender eyes came to me and put her little arms around my neck and said: "Papa," thou wilt let no harm come to thy little Fay, wilt thou?" So much was she like the only woman I ever loved, I could not part with her. So I kept her and she is now 18 years of age. Lady Mortimer believes her *own* child, dead. An old friend of mine, Mrs. Mabb, has been hired by me to care of the boy, Edward, and my own little girl whose name is Edna. They are well kept and want for nothing, good Father.

Jester: Fay, then is *not* thy daughter?

Sir John: No, she is my niece, but like a daughter.

Jester: (aside) *Fay—my sister!* (aloud) Where is she now?

Sir John: She will not consent to my choice of a husband,

and I have her locked in her room. She will not obey me.

Jester: How long has she been prisoned there?

Sir John: Four days. Father, but I will release her to night.

Jester: Thy brother's will, papers, certificates—where are they? I *must* have them. In my keeping *only* will they be safe.

Sir John: In yonder casket, Holy Father, here is the key. Wait till I am dead, then—then thou mayest keep them for me. I—I can not live long—come closer good Father; I—I have yet more to confess. I coveted riches, got money by foul means and fair. That is all Father. I have paid thee well, and my sins are forgiven, are they not, good Father?

Jester: (vehemently) No! Pray and pray fervently to thy Maker! Riches cannot buy what thou needest! (quickly to l c, seizes casket, put it under his robe)

Sir John: (partly rising) How? Come! I am tired of this!

Jester: (rushing at him r c) Down tyrant and murderer! Every door of hell is open now, and the devil will welcome thee!

Sir John: Ob! Oh!—— (falls back in chair—swoon)

Jester: (bending over Sir John) Asleep! (putting casket on table—pouring out wine) Lord of Downer Castle and Earl of Rockford! A Jester fit to amuse the royalty of England. (drinks) Perhaps I'll be king of England some day, who knows. (drinks) Although I am "Jester Earl" at present. The richest (a little drunk) man in England, and I hav'nt a penny. (drinks) The penniless Earl! (laughs) But I must not tarry here; I must to the Courts of Justice! I wonder what little Edna is doing here. (at door listening l c) My! What a handsome Earl I'll make. "*Where got you those eyes?*" I see *now* what it all meant. (draws garb about him) The Priest! (laughs) The Pope should be envious. (noise without) Some one is coming; I must away! (goes to door b c—looks out; returns to Sir John and hisses in his ear) Farewell!——*Uncle!* (laughs heartily, rushes out door b c and quickly returns) The real Priest is coming! I am lost! (voices outside) Where shall I hide? How escape?

Edna: (in door l c) This way Edward, quick!

Jester: Thanks! thanks! Thou art an Angel! (kisses her)

Edna: No! The angel is in here. Come quick! (exit)

Lady Mortimer: (enter b c) The Priest gone? (r c.)
John, dear! Asleep!

James: (b c) Father Garbo—second edition! Te-he! te-he!

Father Garbo: (b c) Good day my children! How is the sufferer?

Lady Mortimer: He is just as thou didst leave him, good Father; only he is sleeping now, and resting easy.

Father Garbo: "As I left him?" Why child—what meanest thou?

Sir John: (arousing) I say, good Father, deal honestly with me and remember thy promise—not to open the casket until I am dead.

Father Garbo: (puzzled) I understand thee not. I have not been here till now. Speak plainly, I pray thee.

Sir John: How? Why I made my confession to thee within the hour; and I did pay thee well.

Lady Mortimer: Indeed, good Father, he speaks the truth.

Father Garbo: (vehemently) How? Who has dared play the impostor? Thou hast been robbed! Cheated!—BY AN IMPOSTOR.

(Enter James door b. c.; Nina l. c. followed by Edna—Bus).

Sir John: (getting from chair) And THOU art the false one!

Father Garbo: (b. c.) How darest thou! (addressing all present) Go! my children, and cry out to all England this outrage, and say that the Holy Church offers one hundred thousand pounds for the discovery and capture of the impostor!!

Jester: (rushing in door l. c. with crucifix and gown in one hand and casket under left arm) Hold! The reward is MINE!

Sir John: (aside) 'Tis HE,—my brother's child, and he has the casket!

Father Garbo: Who speaks?

Jester: He whom men do call "the Jester,"—"the fool,"—a lad whom the world has WRONGED, CHEATED and CURSED, at the word of a monster in the form of man,—THERE he is,—my UNCLE, Sir John Mortimer!

Omnes: How? 'Tis false!

Father Garbo: Thy PROOFS and thy name?

Jester: (aside down l. c.) I have no witnesses to his con-

fession, but I have the casket and the papers.

Nina: (leading Edna) Good father, we did, unobserved, hear Sir John's foul confession to the false priest.

Father Garbo: Let the accuser speak. Come lad, thy proofs and thy name. Speak, or thou must pay for thy bold words. Thy name and thy proofs? Who art thou?

Jester: (c. priest r. c. or b. c.) Edward, Earl of Rockford!

Omnes: Thy proofs!

Jester: [c.] They are HERE,—this casket, which I took by force from the FALSE PRIEST as he was making his escape! [When the curtain goes down, Sir John with a groan falls back in chair r. c. front; Lady Mortimer r. c., head bowed; James at door b. c. gets off laugh; priest b. c.; Jester kneeling one knee—holds out casket to priest; Nina and Fay each hold a hand of Edna l. c.—Edna dancing, and etc. A raise of curtain, Jester and Edna Bus.; priest with papers, casket open—looks angrily at Sir John; Sir John in agony and fear.] Curtain, Fourth Act.

ACT V.

The Earl of Rockford, at home "TILL FURTHER NOTICE." A handsome stage setting. Stairs of marble b. c. if convenient and statuary, draperies, etc. This CAN BE made a great specialty act.

James: [enter l. u. c. singing] I've got a new master, I must work faster. There is no telling what a day may bring forth. Master was a poor jester in the streets, but the wind changed and blew him into Earldom. A good master he is too. Just to think, —I have been working for an old thief and a murderer. Ugh! ugh! But he has gone away to America now and will never return. [Edna singing without.] There is the little one again. She has been following me about all over the castle. I never saw the like of her. [enter Edna l. u. c., with great dignity. A long dress with train and a fan.] She walks like the queen of England. [Bus. Edna does not say a word, but follows him about, using her fan, never changing expression of face. He moves about to avoid her and finally, greatly embarrassed, he runs out l. u. c. laughing. Edna follows slowly with the same air she entered.]

Jester: [enter r. u. c. followed by his foreman] Tell them, furthermore, that the old system of government used by my father will be re-instated, and justice shall be to all. [crossing on slowly to lower entrance left.] There is one more order I would like to

insert for the good and happiness of my loyal subjects. Sir John has imposed greatly upon their loyalty and their humility. Say to them that "while Edward, Earl of Roekford and Lord of Downer castle lives, they shall pay only half the usual rent." To them, well wishes and happiness; the greeting of their lord and master. [exit both.]

Fay: [l. u. e. arm in arm with Nina, crossing to down r. to settee] No, Nina, I can not bear to part with thee now. Wilt thou not stay with us and share our fortune? Faithful thou hast been; it will break my heart to part with thee.

Nina: My cousin, of France has dispatched for me; he is an old man and my only living relative. But oh, Fay!—I can never forget thee and thy kindness and sisterly love. Each day, I shall pray God to bring us together in the world to come, where our mothers are.

Fay: Hast thou spoken to Edward?

Nina: No—no, Fay—I—I—thou wilt tell him all for me,—I can not—tell him, I can not say farewell to him.

Fay: He comes! Speak with him [goes l. u. e, to meet jester.]

Jester: [embracing Fay] Ah! My darling little sister, I have searched everywhere for thee! Good morning, Nina.

Nina: [aside] Oh, I can not tell him. My heart is breaking. [down r. c. at settee.]

Fay: Nina would speak with thee, she is going to leave us. She comes to say farewell. I will join thee presently.

Jester: [cross to r. c.] Going to—[exit Fay l. u. e.: jester tries to speak. Pause. Takes Nina's hand.] Nina: [rising, not looking in jester's face] Yes,—my lord—

Jester: [aside] "My lord?"

Nina: I have come to say farewell—to—to thank thee for all thy kindness—to—to wish thee much—much,—I am going to my cousin, my only living relative, in France. He hath sent for me. I am about to obey him. Thou art a great Earl now,—I wish thee much happiness and my prayers shall be for our meeting in God's Home,—the world above,—

Jester: Nay,—I pray thee speak not thus. Heaven can not be more beautiful than this world seems to me now. It is the first glorious day of my new life. Music and sunshine! When thou leavest me, this new-found world is darkened and the music

dies away with the sound of thy voice. [closer to her] Dost thou love me, Nina?

Nina: Oh, sir!—do not mock me,—do not speak—

Jester: Dost thou love me, Nina?

Nina: [hand still in jester's, his arm about her.] I—I—

Jester: Dost thou love me, Nina?

Nina: Oh, sir—thou art a great Earl, and I,—I am a friendless, penniless orphan,—'t would be mockery to speak of—

Jester: With the just God, whose children all are we, both best, and worst, there *is* no *last* nor *first*! [Pause.] Dost thou love me, Nina? [Greatly embarrassed—Nina turns quickly to him and buries her face in his bosom.] Thou dost! Thou dost! [embracing her and leading off front left entrance, his arm about her.] The grandest "yes"—I ever knew!

Edna: [enter r. u. e. in time to witness] Whew! [to Jack Robinson outside] Come on! Come on! This way, *Mr. Jack*! [enter Jack, hat in hand, dressed neatly] This way, *me boy*! Aint this a fine castle we live in? And its all *ours*—paid for—got the papers on 'em!

Jack: [r. c.] Sure, and it is a fine place,—so much better than the old room in the attic.

Edna: Right thou art, *me boy*—*Mr. JACK*.

Jack: But where is Master Edward—I mean the Earl—er—

Edna: Oh, he will be here presently. He has a little engagement on the lawn.

Jack: I say, little one, do reckon he'll speak to *me*?

Edna: Sure!

Jack: And shake hands wid me?

Edna: Sure! Why not? He will be mighty glad to see thee, I bet!

Jack: Well, thou must know, little one, that wealth and rank make a great deal of change, in England. It is not man that makes the money—but money that makes the man.

Edna: (jumping from seat and rushing l. u. e. to meet jester who enters with Fay and Nina, an arm around each) Oh, Edward! Edward! Mr. Jack's here!—Come to see thee.

Jester: (discovering Jack and crossing to him) Ah, Jack! My boy, I'm devilish glad to see thee. (shake hands heartily) Permit me to introduce to thee, my sister, Lady Fay and the future Lady Edward of Rockford castle. (Nina) And

this little one is—is—yes she is my sister—my younger sister Lady Edna—

Edna: Why, *Jack*—yes Jack and I are *old friends*. Arnt we, Jack?

Jack: Indeed we are. (all laugh).

Jester: Bye-the-bye Jack,—I need a good man. I know it will be a great sacrifice for thee to quit the play-house—but I need a player—some one to make us laugh. Come and live here at Rockford castle. I'll give thee a home and an allowance of five thousand pounds per annum for the rest of thy life.

Jack: Great Holies! Oh, I shall be delighted, thanks! thanks! But I say—Master Edward—wont that be cheating thee? (all laugh) I'll come, and may the Holies bless thee for thy remembrance of an old comrade!

Edna: Yes, Mr. Jack, but Edward aint *no more like* he used to be.

Jester: Why, little one, what is the matter?

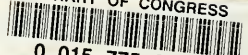
Edna: Thou wilt never play with me again, nor tell me pretty fairy tales; and thou wilt never dance and make me have a good time any more. (all laugh).

Fay: Our brother, little one, has the duties and responsibilities of an Earl. Many lives depend upon his actions. Come, sister Fay and Nina will play with thee. Edward is no longer a Jester.

Jester: (c.) No. But he has the Jester's heart! So come, little one!—all, and we will join in memory of the past. Come Jack, do thy duty. (They dance. Curtain falls. End).



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